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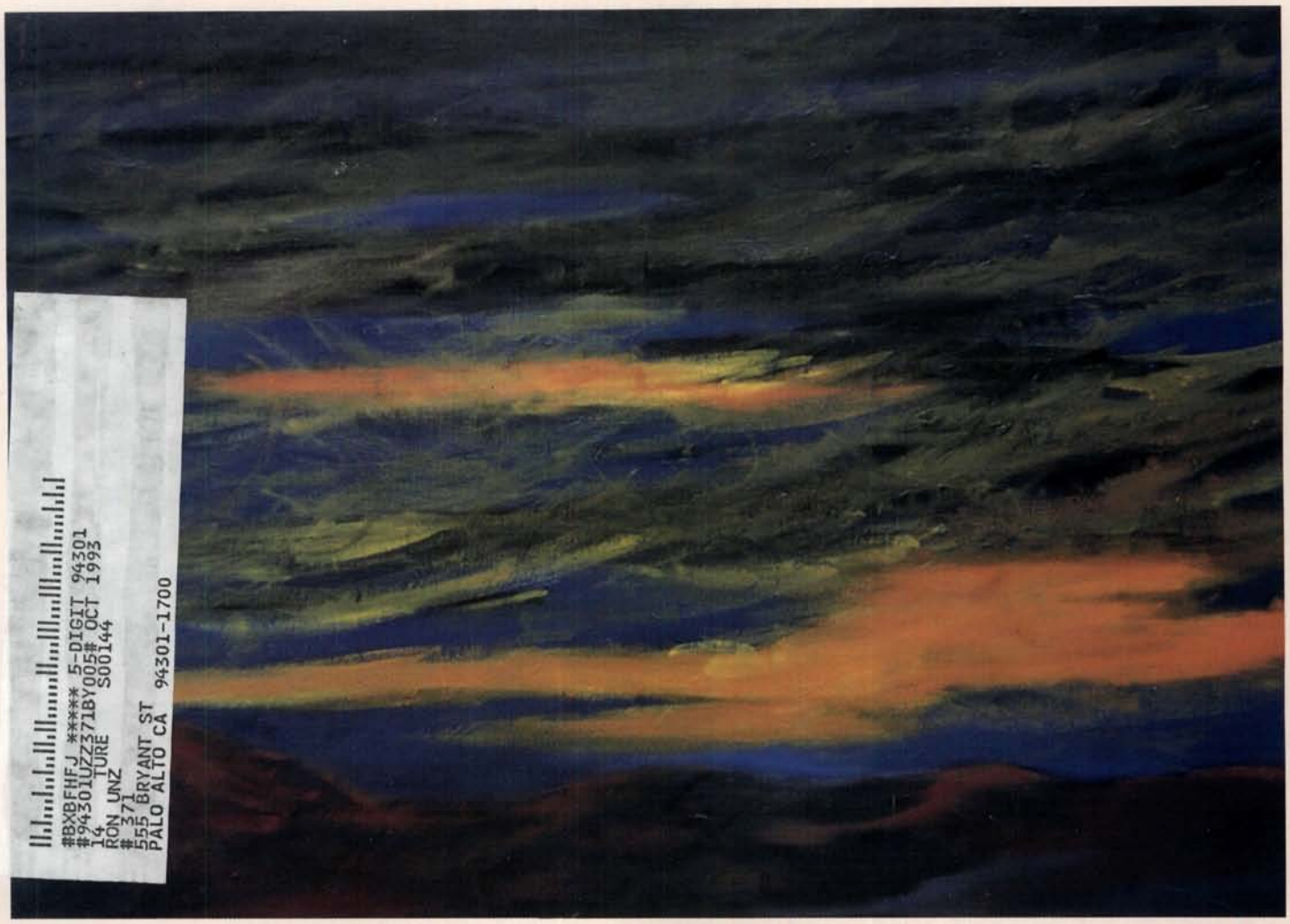

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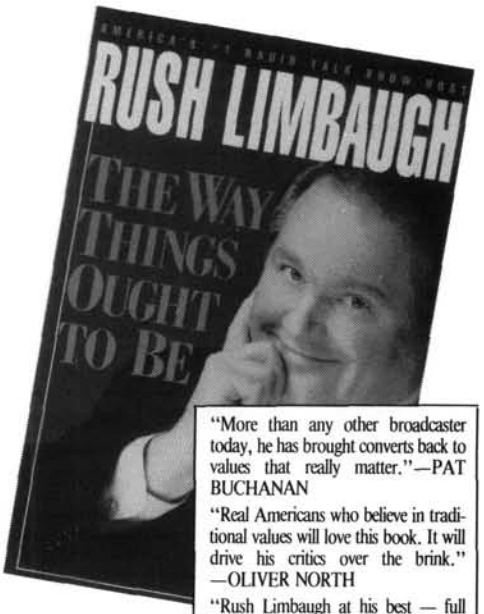

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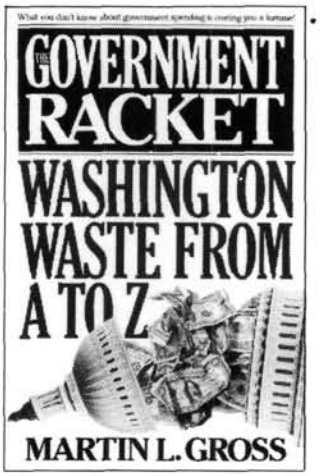

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"La tregua," oil and acrylic painting by Teresa Maresca, an Italian painter living and working in Milan.

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 17, No. 4 April 1993

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On 'Clerical Celibacy'

Professor Jenkins bears false witness against me in "Priests and Pedophiles" (December 1992) when he implies that somehow I am an opponent of clerical celibacy. The only thing I've ever written on the subject has been in support of celibacy. I have consistently argued that most pedophiles are married men and that the pedophilia syndrome is acquired early in life, usually by being a victim of sexual abuse oneself, and does not result from celibacy.

—*Father Andrew Greeley*

Professor Jenkins Replies:

Father Greeley accuses me of misrepresenting his views and says that he has never linked the problem of priestly pedophilia to the issue of clerical celibacy. I am interested to hear this statement from a writer whose opinions on Catholic matters rightly receive widespread respect and attention. However, not once does my article attribute to him the view described. My references to his work state, quite correctly, that he has gone on record as emphasizing the scale and seriousness of the "abuse" problem and as criticizing the handling of that issue by the Church. I was particularly quoting his op-ed piece entitled "Priestly Silence on Pedophilia," from the *New York Times*. I did not refer to his position on celibacy and do not think I can fairly be described as "bearing false witness" against anybody in this matter. On the other hand, it can be amply documented that other writers on "priestly pedophilia" do indeed draw the connection with celibacy.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

AS THIS ARTICLE and this issue of *Chronicles* go to press, the United States Senate Judiciary Committee will be considering whether Dade County State Attorney Janet Reno is, by her character, fit to serve this nation as Attorney General.

My own opinion is, *no*. In the 1988 Dade County, Florida, general election, I was Attorney General-Designate Janet Reno's Republican opponent. I ran against her and lost by a two to one margin—the most respectable margin any of her opponents has ever garnered—knowing I could not win in a town whose sole newspaper, the *Miami Herald*, has turned her over the past 15 years into an icon of political correctness.

I ran against Reno because of our wildly divergent views on the aims of the criminal justice system. That is why the Fraternal Order of Police endorsed me, even knowing full well I could not win. The rank-and-file officers whom the FOP represents had grown to hate Reno because of her long-held animus toward police and legitimate law enforcement efforts, and they were desperate to express that hatred. Here's an example of the hard lesson Dade police officers had already learned in the streets and in Reno's courtrooms. In the only debate of our campaigns against one another, televised from the studio of WLRN-TV in Miami, each of us was asked our highest priority as Dade State Attorney. I said: "To put away as many criminals for as long as possible." Reno said: "My highest priority has always been not to convict criminals but rather to protect their rights." Straight out of the ACLU policy manual, as is her penchant to prosecute law officers for "excessive use of force" when no credible evidence of same exists.

The demoralizing effect Attorney General Reno will have upon the federal law enforcement community will be devastating; just ask any South Florida law officer. But it is Reno's character and not her policies that will be the focus of debate during her nomination hearings. The "advise and consent" clause conferring confirmation power for Cabinet and other offices upon the Senate has, for better or worse, devolved to make "character" the only *ostensible*

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legitimate area of inquiry. The "Borking" of Clarence Thomas was done for policy reasons, but it had to proceed under the guise of "character" inquiry.

What, then, are my and others' concerns about Reno's character? First, there is the question of her "sexual orientation." In our campaign, Reno categorically denied, without refuting the evidence, that she is a "closeted lesbian." NOW President and outed-but-formerly-closeted-lesbian Patricia Ireland is one who pushed Clinton to nominate Reno and said, "We need this *kind* of woman at Justice." Reno, when asked *after* her post-nomination triumphal return to Miami by the assembled media at the Miami Airport what her sexual orientation was, said: "Mr. Thompson is preoccupied with my sexual orientation. I am an old maid who has a strong affection for men." Not exactly a categorical denial anymore. The *Miami Herald* transmogrified that weak-kneed rebuff into a stronger statement: ". . . who has a strong attraction to men." Even the *Herald* knew the "affection for" phrase constituted a winking admission, so it misreported what Reno said to the cameras into the "attraction" quotation, which is what ran in nearly every American newspaper the next day.

Days later Queer Nation weighed in with an "outing" outside the Justice Department in which their spokesperson stated that "many homosexuals in Miami have contacted us and told us that Reno's lesbianism is common knowledge among the gay community." NOW's Patricia Ireland interestingly weighed in, after the "outing," with an interesting statement: "Ms. Reno should not be judged on the basis of her sexual orientation."

Are Reno's sexual proclivities, *per se*, the core issue? Not these days, at least not to me. The issue has always been Reno's *blackmailability* because of her *closeted* proclivities. Blackmail occurs between the ears of the blackmail target. Reno cannot now come out of the closet if she wanted to, because it would end her public career. She would have to admit she lied for 20 years.

The liberals have very recently made the point exquisitely in the wake of Anthony Summers' book, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, about J. Edgar Hoover's closeted homosexuality and the blackmail danger it posed to this law enforcement officer's judgment and integrity. No such even-handed analysis has been brought to bear upon Reno's sexual proclivities by anyone in the confirmation process or the media, even though I and others have conveyed evidence to the attorney hired by Clinton, liberal Maryland attorney Lanny Davis, to check out Reno's background *prior* to her nomination. Indeed, Communications Director George Stephanopolous responded to an inquiry in the White House briefing room days before Reno was nominated about whether the "sexual orientation" of the Attorney General was relevant. He said that it was not.

If you don't buy my analysis of what may be a problem here, how about Reno's immediate predecessor and boss, Dade County State Attorney Richard Gerstein, a life-long Democrat, who died in 1992 and whose front-page obituary in the *Miami Herald* contained the following admonition of Gerstein: "No [closeted] homosexual can be a prosecutor because it gives every defendant the blackmail option." Gerstein did not know of the Trojan Horse within his office.

Upon Reno's nomination, I and others gave the Senate Judiciary Committee and the FBI evidence not only of Reno's closeted lesbianism, but also of her alleged: a) use of "escort service" girls for sex. One such call girl, whose name is "Crystal," has reputedly told the publisher of a certain "escort" magazine that she has received money for sex from Reno at Reno's home; b) apprehension by a Broward County police officer in a shopping-mall parking lot in the backseat of a car with a disrobed girl, as related by a homosexual Ft. Lauderdale talk-show host; c) long-standing relationship with a South Florida television news anchorwoman.

Could Reno really be blackmailed? In 1987, I persuaded her to open an investigation of some local pornographers. She acknowledged in the September 24, 1987, edition of the *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* that she opened the investigation per my request. The pornographer then announced publicly that if Reno pursued him, he would make the case that she is a lesbian. The investigation was dropped, no explanations given. I was successful thereafter in the federal venue in determining that these pornographers were indeed engaged in criminal activity, as I had alleged to Reno.

Reno is more than willing to punish those who threaten to open one of her closet doors. For example, shortly after I went public with my assertions and evidence of Reno's lesbianism, the Florida Bar, on whose Board of Governors sit Reno's campaign contributors, retained a Dr. Barry Crown to render an opinion that I was "mentally incapacitated" even though Dr. Crown had never met me. Dr. Crown is reported to receive massive expert witness fees from Reno's office. That ploy by Reno's supporters backfired, as a neutral psychiatrist and psychologist ultimately agreed to by the Bar certified me sane after a full battery of tests. I am now one of the few certified sane lawyers in Florida.

Reno and her friends tried to use the Bar again when I blew the whistle (in the pages of *Chronicles*) on the illegal distribution of pro-homosexual audio tapes to the children of the Dade County School System. I beat that scam also, and thanks to Reno's unsuccessful Bar gambits, the Florida Bar's insurance carrier just paid me $20,000 in damages for this frontal assault upon my First Amendment rights.

Another example of protective retribution by Reno is the case of Jim Collier, who brought evidence on massive Dade County electronic vote fraud to Janet Reno, which evidence included bogus computer cards being pre-punched and fed into the vote-counting machines. Collier took these fraudulently pre-punched ballots directly to Reno, but Reno, rather than investigating the fraud which would inconvenience a number of her political allies, had the public-spirited Mr. Collier arrested for grand theft of ballots even though Collier took the "stolen" ballots to Reno. Mr. Collier has told his tale to an interested investigator reporting to Judiciary Chairman Joe Biden and may indeed testify at the confirmation hearings.

Alex Cockburn wrote in the March 8, 1993, issue of the *Nation* that Reno is not beyond using unsavory methods to accomplish her goals. Mr. Cockburn doesn't know the half of it when it comes to Reno's desperate methods to protect herself and her carefully crafted closet of many doors. If she heads Justice, she will turn the Justice Department into the latest oxymoron.

At press time, homosexuality, even closeted homosexuality, appears to be a qualification rather than a detriment to Reno's nomination, but there is one door yet opening in the Reno closet.

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John Bliss, a Republican investigator on the Senate Judiciary Committee who reports to Colorado Senator Hank Brown, told me and another person on a conference call at six o'clock p.m. on February 18 that the Committee had preliminary evidence unexpectedly fall into its lap that Reno has been pulled over five times while "driving under the influence" in Dade County. The contact with the Republican investigators on the Judiciary Committee had been David Gibbons, Director of Federal Affairs at the National Rifle Association. Gibbons, according to Bliss, had been approached by a former Dade Assistant State Attorney, under Janet Reno, who had been told by five police officers about five separate drunk-driving incidents. Reno had not, the officers stated, been arrested, because of fear of reprisals by her, but electronic logging tapes memorializing the pull-overs might prove the apprehensions.

United States Senator Trent Lott's office has memoranda relating to the drunk-driving information, as well as to the willingness of the five officers to come forward if Reno is asked in the confirmation hearings if she has ever been pulled over after drinking. One memo has been circulated to Republican senators and representatives, all of whom have remained silent. It states that the officers will come forward to prove a) she has been pulled over and b) she has committed perjury in swearing she was not. When are the Republicans going to come forward? Will the questions ever be asked?

Given the timidity among the Republican senators on the Judiciary Committee, the question is more likely to come from the other side of the aisle. The Republican senators, according to sources on the committee staff, are loathe to tangle in the wake of Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas with another female, this time a nominee, backed by the radical feminist lobby.

The Republican senators, according to John Bliss, would not even ask Democratic Chairman Joseph Biden for a subpoena to compel the NRA's Dave Gibbons and now two other persons who know the former Reno assistant's name to cough up that name, under threat of a contempt of Congress citation if they refused, which would compel the former Reno assistant to come forward. The former assistant has indicated that what she knows may cost her her job, and she is reluctant to come forward fully. A congressional subpoena upon those who have her name would *force* her to come forward. [Ed. note: Bliss denies possession of such information, but political activist Priscilla Gray says she discussed the D. U. I.'s in a conference call with Bliss.] The Republicans, however, are not pushing for the name. Why? The fear of being "Arlen Specter-ized" runs deep among the nervous GOP senators. As one former U. S. senator told me this week: "That cowardice is why we're the minority party."

No such cowardice is evident among the Democrats. Senator Joe Biden's investigative staffers—Mark Schwartz and Mary DeOreo—interviewed me for more than an hour on February 23 much more professionally and thoroughly—and sympathetically—than did the Republicans. It may be that Senator Biden takes more seriously his "advise and consent" duties than do the Republicans, or maybe this confirmation battle is a trial contest with the White House as to who will really pick the next Supreme Court Justice: Hillary or Joe. Whatever the reason, the clear conclusion from talking to Biden's people is that they wanted to know and do something appropriate with evidence of Reno's character problems, especially the D. U. I. problems and cover-up thereof. The Republicans have only responded with fear.

Therefore, as this article goes to press, the Senate Judiciary Committee has compelling evidence that Reno has a potential closet full of personal problems from lesbianism to chronic alcohol abuse. Blackmail, the Judiciary Committee has been told, can be visited both upon her and by her. It is problematic as to whether the committee, on either side of the aisle, will use its considerable investigative powers, including the subpoena power, to ferret out the truth. America deserves to know what kind of Attorney General it is getting. The reader of this article will have the benefit of knowing if anything came of any of this—if Janet Reno's confused personal life sullied and sank her nomination, and with it the dwindling perception that Bill Clinton knows how to govern. The perception of the Republicans, at least, is not dwindling. They are not even on the radar screen, so total has been their failure to discharge their "advise and consent" duties during the now extended confirmation process.

When Reno was nominated, CNN's Bernard Shaw intoned: "Many Capitol Hill insiders say this nominee, after two false starts by Clinton, must be the Caesar's wife of Attorney General nominees." Reno is nobody's wife. There may be reasons for that.

—John B. Thompson

THE JAPANESE have been zealous in buying up American symbols: golf courses, movie studios, Rockefeller Center, the Mariners. Recently, however, they are beginning to learn that cosmopolitanism can be a two-way street. In January, American sumo wrestler Chad Rowan became the first foreigner to be awarded the rank of "Exalted Grand Champion." Six feet five inches and 455 pounds, Rowan is able to dominate the smaller Japanese wrestlers, and a century-old cultural tradition, deeply embedded in Shintoism, may soon be as American as Coca Cola, jeans, and Cheap Trick.

The internationalist press in the United States is absolutely thrilled, not only because this proves the sincerity of the Japanese promise to open their markets to foreign competition, but, more importantly, because American sumo wrestlers strike a blow for bland uniformity in the New World of women clergymen, homosexual marines, girl boyscouts, white bluesmen, and Korean cellists. If the pygmies had wrestling events, they would probably have to open them up to the bloated behemoths of the WFL.

The entire United States sometimes seems like a million-mile-long strip mall studded with Chi Chi's, Olive Gardens, Pizza Huts, and TGI Friday's serving the same microwaved compost with a light ethnic accent. Processed white cheese and tomato paste make it Italian, chili powder makes it Mexican. The great American melting pot turns out to contain Hamburger Helper, and if a cook serves ribs on Martin Luther King's birthday, he is engaging in "negative stereotyping." We have lost the right to be different, because being really different means the ability to discriminate and to exclude. Orthodox Jews cannot remain orthodox if they allow women to become rabbis, and a Christian fraternity may not admit Jews without ceasing to be Christian. When black

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scholars claim that only they can interpret the "black experience," they may be forfeiting their academic status, but they are staking a claim on the more solid ground of authenticity. Of course, we are all human beings, and we can all make educated guesses as to what it is like to be black or Chinese or Southern Protestant, but the native knows things from experience that no gifted outsider can ever figure out. If Americans were not so poorly educated, they would know this, but our journalists and politicians manage to graduate from college unscathed by the histories, languages, and literatures of any people, including their own. If they were to read this screed, they would take to outputting their files on human rights and the global village. "You, you're laughing," says Horace, "but the joke's on you."

To insist upon openness and equality is to deny others the right to be themselves. "I am what I am and that's all that I am," was the creed of Popeye the sailorman, but in today's world Olive and Bluto and Swee'pea would all be lodging suits alleging victimization, discrimination against bullies, and spinach deprivation. Besides, Popeye's conduct after Pearl Harbor constitutes Japan-bashing and race-baiting.

America has come a long way since the 1940's, and the NBA recently inducted Ulyona Semyonova, a 7'2" Russian female, into its Hall of Fame. What nation, exactly, does the NBA represent?

If the Japanese are smart, they will do more than impose the weight limit they are contemplating. They will find some apparently innocent way to declare, in their charmingly xenophobic way, that sumo wrestling is a Japanese folk art that is not open to foreigners. Men wanted, no foreign devils need apply. The Japanese, as we have known them for the past hundred years, are an enemy worth our admiration and, occasionally, deserving of our animosity. If they are foolish enough to open themselves up to an American takeover, they will deserve the contempt we ordinarily reserve for ourselves, who have practically nothing left to sell out.

—*Thomas Fleming*

OBITER DICTA will be an occasional, "by the way" column in *Chronicles*. Appearing at the end of Cultural Revolutions, it will report on past and future events of interest and on the comings, goings, and doings of friends of *Chronicles*.

This month, for example, we would like to note that Bill Kauffman and David R. Slavitt are now listed as corresponding editors on our masthead. Author of the novel *Every Man a King*, Mr. Kauffman will contribute a series of articles to *Chronicles* on the old Middle American culture. Having already written for the magazine on such subjects as Sinclair Lewis, Henry W. Clune, and the struggles between Upstate and Downstate New York, Mr. Kauffman is a welcome addition to our force. As is Mr. Slavitt, who has written bimonthly movie reviews for *Chronicles* for several years now.

We are also pleased to see that the National Humanities Institute's *Humanitas* has taken on some extra pages and is now a thin journal. The additional space will, as its editors reason in a statement entitled "HUMANITAS: Rethinking It All" for their Fall 1992/Winter 1993 issue, allow for more "scholarship that challenges uncritical assumptions and can set the humanities on a more promising course." *Humanitas* aims to "oppose the facile classification of ideas in political terms and . . . encourage articles that go beyond an obsolescent left-right distinction"—good news for anyone interested in the future of the humanities.

Finally, we would like to report on two conferences organized in part by *Chronicles*: the third annual John Randolph Club meeting, which was held in Chicago last December 11 and 12, and a smaller gathering to discuss European (and American) politics, which will take place in Chicago from March 26 to 28.

"Bosnia, USA: Ethnic Conflict at Home and Abroad" was the fiery topic of this year's John Randolph Club conspiration (somehow "conference" does not seem the appropriate word), during which club members demonstrated their intellectual and oratorical strength by delivering engaging and (more or less) relevant talks, often at literally a moment's notice. Not even blustering blizzards on the East Coast (which prevented several of the scheduled participants, including the keynote speaker, from attending) could stop the club from engaging in its (sometimes heated) debate. With scholars like Ralph Raico of the SUNY at Buffalo, Antony Sullivan of the Earhart Foundation, and Leonard Liggio of the Institute for Humane Studies filling in for snowed-in members, panels on subjects like "IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE: The Threat to Liberty" and "BLADERUNNER: L. A. and the Aftermath" provided ample food for thought. As did Wayne Lutton, associate editor of the *Social Contract*, and Samuel Francis, a columnist for the *Washington Times* and a contributing editor of *Chronicles*, with their discussions of the consequences of massive immigration and the possibilities of white reaction to ethnic violence, respectively. Their panel, entitled "INVASION USA: Ethnic Conflict in America," left the audience crying for more discussion time as the meeting broke for lunch. Jared Taylor, who graciously filled in for the stranded keynote speaker the second night of the conference, gave attendees a preview of his recently published book *Paved With Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America*. The John Randolph Club, which was founded by the Rockford Institute and the Ludwig Von Mises Institute to encourage exchange between traditionalists and libertarians, plans its next meeting for this fall. For more information about the club, please write to: Burton Blumert, 875 Mahler Rd., #150, Burlingame, CA 94010.

The upcoming "New Politics" conference, while probably somewhat tamer than the JRC escapade, proves to be equally engaging. Bringing together a small number of writers and scholars to talk about the nationalist, regionalist, and populist movements of Europe and the United States, the conference aims to initiate a continuing dialectic among intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic. Conference participants will include (among others): Alain de Benoist, head of GRECE (Grouping of Research and Studies for European Civilization) and editor of the journals *Krisis* and *Nouvelle école*; Robert D'Amico, professor of philosophy at the University of Florida; Thomas Molnar, author of the recent *Philosophical Grounds*; Paul Piccone, editor of *Telos: A Journal of Critical Social Thought*; Carlo Ruzza, a visiting professor of sociology at the University of Surrey in England whose home is Como, Italy; and Tomislav Sunic, professor of European politics at Juniata College in Pennsylvania. c

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by Samuel Francis

Paths of Glory

As I write this column (in late January), the United States has deployed 30,000 troops in Somalia, has just launched new bombing strikes against Iraq, has announced a naval blockade of Haiti, and is debating whether it should send combat forces into the Balkans. By the time you read this column (in late March), there is literally no telling where our military forces will be engaged, though any number of locations are entirely possible: South Africa, where the "transition from apartheid" may or may not proceed at a pace and in a fashion that suits the friends of global egalitarianism; Sudan, which endures famine and chaos no less severe than Somalia; Germany, where riots against immigrants have taken a number of lives in the last few months and suggest the incipient revival of a militant counterrevolutionary nationalism; or any of several other countries and regions where internal disorders, unsavory political conditions, or social and economic problems that Americans find disgusting may sound the bugles for the cavalry to mount and administer mercy at the point of American bayonets. But what droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven these days is less likely to be mercy than the payloads of American bombers.

There is no way to tell where American troops will be sent a few months from now because, quite simply, virtually no one in the policymaking positions in our government nor in the opinion-making classes of American society any longer considers "national interest" to be the operative principle by which foreign military intervention should be determined. When President-elect Clinton announced just before his inauguration that he would retain President Bush's policy of turning back boatloads of Haitian immigrants, his stated reason for violating his own campaign promise and not welcoming an armada of unskilled, illiterate, and disease-ridden invaders to our shores had nothing to do with our national interest, nor even with enforcing long-standing and popularly supported laws against illegal immigration. His decision, he proclaimed, was based on the welfare of the Haitians themselves. Reversing the policy, you see, would encourage the pilgrims to embark on the high seas in quest of the happy harbors of Miami, and many of them might drown or expire from exhaustion and exposure before the Coast Guard could save them from the consequences of their ill-conceived expedition. Presumably, if Genghis Khan and the Golden Horde returned to life and headed across the Bering Straits for Seattle, any resistance they met from the United States government would be predicated on the need to spare the Mongols the risk of catching pneumonia in their journey through Alaska's arctic wilderness.

The extinction of the concept of "national interest" as the governing guideline of our foreign policy betrays the coming extinction of the nation-state itself, or what our governing elite would like to be its extinction. Hardly any discussion of "post-Cold War foreign policy," from high-school commencement addresses to highly classified memoranda exchanged among the munchkins of the national security labyrinth, fails to rehearse all the clichés of a "global economy," the "meaninglessness" of national borders, and the evolution of the planet toward political, cultural, economic, and demographic "interdependence." Such platitudes are not simply rhetorical commonplaces replacing salutations of the Founding Fathers and biblical allusions as staples of public oratory. They establish and are intended to establish the conceptual framework within which actual policies are designed and by which the choice of actions available to policymakers is delimited. The general consequence of such language is not merely neglect of the national interest but its obliteration and the removal from the national consciousness of any inkling that there are some things that are important, and others that are unimportant or actually harmful, for the nation to do. The more specific result will be the eventual evaporation of any concept of the nation itself as a distinct political and cultural unit. An institution that has no interests of its own to pursue or that perennially fails to pursue them and whose leaders and members are profoundly oblivious to such interests cannot be said to exist in any but the most vacuous and abstruse sense.

The disappearance of the concept of "national interest" is not, then, an accident, nor the result of sloppy thinking and careless expression. It corresponds to and reflects one of the major social trends of our times, the formation of a genuinely supranational apparatus of global management administered and governed by an emerging supranational elite. Given the global reach of modern organizations and the homogenization that their operations demand, a unified global government able to enforce such homogeneity is consistent with the interests of the groups that manage these organizations, and the building of a global government necessarily involves the erosion of national units as politically sovereign and culturally distinctive organisms. Nor is it an accident that the elaboration of the basic concepts and institutions of this "New World Order" is now more or less explicitly voiced by the hired mouthpieces of the emerging regime.

Last year, at a meeting of the Group of Seven in Paris, the big enchiladas of the "global economy" assigned some homework to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. They instructed him to design plans for a standing army of the United Nations able to undertake missions "for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping." By June, the secretary-general had completed his work and turned in his paper. What he proposed, and what his instructors wanted, is nothing less than an independent armed force that would empower the United Nations itself as a new global power in its own right.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali's proposal is to "bring into being, through negotiations, the special agreements . . . whereby member states undertake to make armed forces, assistance and facilities available to the Security Council . . . not only on an ad hoc basis but on a permanent basis." In the past, you see, U.N. "peacekeeping forces" were limited. They were sent into a region only after a ceasefire among the combatants had been worked out, not into combat situations, and their own combat was con-

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fined to self-defense, unless they enjoyed special authorization for large-scale collective enforcement action, as in Korea in 1950 or Kuwait in 1990. Under the new proposal, the U.N. army would be virtually independent of the states whose troops actually composed its force and whose money financed it, and the Security Council itself would decide when and against whom the army under its exclusive control would strike.

The plan's rather alarming implications for the institution of national sovereignty, though muted in the secretary-general's report in June, are explicit in the ruminations of such professional munchkins of the supranational Lollipop guild as former U.N. apparatchik Sir Brian Urquhart, who intoned in the *New York Times* in 1991 that "the unraveling of national sovereignty seems to be a feature of the post-Cold War period" and who proposed plans remarkably similar to those later unbosomed by Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

In his report, the secretary-general was a bit cagey about sovereignty, professing that, well, of course, he believed in it, though we wouldn't want to overdo, would we? "Respect for . . . fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress," he assured us, but, so his very next sentence read, "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed." Mr. Boutros-Ghali recapitulated his non sequiturs in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, where he informed us that "while respect for the fundamental sovereignty and integrity of the state remains central, it is undeniable that the centuries-old doctrine of absolute and exclusive sovereignty no longer stands, and was in fact never so absolute as it was conceived to be in theory."

Sovereignty, however, is almost by definition a pretty absolute concept. Either you have it or you don't, and being a "little bit sovereign" is no more feasible than being a little bit pregnant. But however weaselish his words, Mr. Boutros-Ghali couldn't disguise his ultimate goals. "The world," he wrote, "is still in some ways in its 'Middle Ages' when it comes to international organizations and cooperation. Centuries were required before the struggle among monarchical and baronial forces was transformed into states capable of carrying out responsibilities in the fields of security, economy, and justice. There is no doubt that the institutions of the U.N. system must travel such a path if chaos is to be avoided." The analogy he draws is pretty clear: sovereign nations today are analogous to the feudal barons of the Middle Ages, whose autonomy and power were eventually crushed by the emerging dynastic monarchies, which are analogous to the pharaonic world government that glitters in Mr. Boutros-Ghali's dark Egyptian eyes. What is a little bit pregnant turns out to be the United Nations itself, from the belly of which will eventually spring a now-embryonic planetary regime.

It may be imagined that, being an Egyptian, Mr. Boutros-Ghali is peripheral to the mainstream of what is actually thought and done in the West, but such is not the case. Nor is enthusiasm for a One World State under the United Nations confined to the eccentric corners of the political left, where One Worldism has long linked arms with the white-lipped advocates of Esperanto, Peace Toys, the Rehabilitation of Criminals, and the Metric System to mount the soapboxes at Marble Arch and similar locations every Sunday. Last December, popular historian Paul Johnson managed to take time off from his annual publication of a seemingly endless series of obese volumes that would take serious scholars a lifetime to complete and penned an article for *National Review* that demanded what he called a "New Imperialism." It is of no small interest that while those on the political left, like Mr. Boutros-Ghali, couch the New World Order in humanitarian terms calculated to appeal to the ideological confabulations of their comrades, those on the political right (or who have insinuated themselves into the right) like Mr. Johnson frame almost the same proposals in terms that will catch the fancy of the retired colonels who pine for the days of Kipling and King of the Khyber Rifles. Such convergence between right and left in the context of what the brahmins of each category propose is itself part of the cultural and political homogenization that the new global order demands.

Mr. Johnson, however, doesn't much like Mr. Boutros-Ghali and suggests that he be fired (even after the secretary-general had so successfully completed his homework earlier in the year), but he at least appears to agree that "a new global structure of order" needs to be established in which the U.N. Security Council will provide the keystone and the muscle. The creation of this new order will involve transforming "collective security from a reactive and negative force into a true watchdog, engaged in foreseeing and forestalling—crime prevention and disaster avoidance." "Like the traditional Great Powers and their general staffs," breathes Mr. Johnson, "the Security Council must learn to devise diplomatic, military, and logistical plans for all foreseeable disturbances," and "the Security Council and its agents will become the last, most altruistic and positive of the imperial powers, restoring to the word colonialism the 'good name' it once enjoyed—in Mediterranean antiquity no less than the 19th century." Like many Englishmen, Mr. Johnson appears not to have a clue as to just how despised the British Empire was in the 19th century, not only by those peoples whom it tried unsuccessfully and often brutally to civilize but even by those, like many Americans and Europeans, who always saw through the cant, greed, and tyranny that animated so much that lay in its heart. As for the "good name" that Mr. Johnson imagines colonialism enjoyed in ancient times, the Gauls, Greeks, Jews, and Egyptians whom the Romans slaughtered and enslaved might have had a name for it that was not so benign, though surely each of them had done pretty much the same sort of thing in their own day.

To be fair, of course, Mr. Johnson is proposing the "New Imperialism" as a means of taking care of Third World peoples and countries that obviously are incapable of taking care of themselves, though nowhere does he establish any good reason why we—the West, let alone the United States—should assume that burden. Nor do any of the pioneers of the new empire consider (at least in print) what may be the consequences for the sovereign nations of the West of a world run by the U.N. Security Council. We can already perceive one consequence through the fog of our adventure in Somalia this winter, an adventure begotten somewhere in the bowels of the White House and "authorized" by the United Nations, just as our earlier crusade against Iraq was similarly "authorized" by the same body. Since the United States had no compelling national interest to make war against Iraq or to invade Somalia and since national

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interest has ceased to determine when, where, and why "we" decide to send troops, why shouldn't the United Nations, composed of delegates for whom no American ever voted, decide such affairs for us? For that matter, since the United Nations as yet has no soldiers under its own command nor any money of its own with which to recruit and arm them, why shouldn't American soldiers enforce whatever it is the court eunuchs of the new empire decree? And why shouldn't we get used to the idea that providing the military power for the "New Imperialism" will be our principal role in the future? Moreover, and this is another consequence of the New World Order and the empowerment of the United Nations in a form independent of the nation-states that created it, why shouldn't the Security Council someday deploy its own troops against us?

Warlords in Somalia may someday look pretty tame compared to the warrior kings who lead the Crips and the Bloods in Los Angeles, and the chaos they may someday cause would provide at least as good a reason for the New World Army to show up in South-Central L.A. as we have for sending our own troops to Mogadishu. So, for that matter, would American "racism," mistreatment of women and children, standards of health not up to the snuff of the World Health Organization, environmental problems, or any of the scads of derelictions perennially invented by those of the managerial elite whose business it is to concoct "problems" that they can then "solve."

So far, most Americans seem to be fairly passive about what One Worlders have in mind for them, and perhaps, as long as too many of us don't get killed, taxes don't increase too much, and it doesn't preempt the sit-coms too often, most of us will go along with it. But the irony is that in most of the world, even as Mr. Boutros-Ghali, Sir Brian, Mr. Johnson, and their party announce the end of national sovereignty, nationalism is thriving and aspirations to national independence, political autonomy, and cultural identity are flourishing. It is the resurrection of just such assertions of nationality and group solidarity that is the real wave of history, and it is the conflict between those who exhibit them and the emerging global elite that seeks to suppress and supersede them that constitutes the real line of political and social struggle in the coming century. Those assertions and the conflicts they engender may be dormant in the United States today, but sooner or later they will awaken, and when they do, the nightmarish fantasy of a unified and homogeneous planet will scatter like the straw it is.

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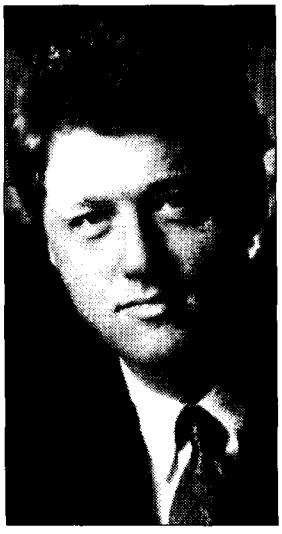

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The Creative Coalition: Selling Substance, Not Just Celebrity

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Trollopes in the Stacks

by Thomas Fleming

Nineteen ninety-two, if not quite an *annus mirabilis*, was a year "crowded with incident," as Lady Bracknell would say. The repercussions of Gorbachev's fall, the hot war in Bosnia that took the self-congratulatory edge out of the end of the Cold War, and the rise to power of Flem Snopes' grandson illuminated American television sets during the dinner news hour.

For most of us, these incidents touched our lives, if at all, for only a few moments a day. They took place somewhere in the fairyland of images where heroes and antediluvian monsters still do battle for the principle of one man/one vote. Most Americans seemed more interested in the goings-on of the white-trash British royalty that get paid handsomely for misbehaving. In America, where we used to be, according to Fisher Ames, "too poor and too proud to acknowledge a king," our own version of royalty was making even better money, posing for naughty pictures. People who had never been to a bookstore before were standing in line to buy their own copy of Madonna's *Sex*. Some could not wait to get out of the store with their treasure and began tearing off the plastic wrap that sealed the contents against dampness, dirt, and free riders who wanted to look without buying.

America may be taking its time about coming out of a recession, but we still have more money than sense. Some felt cheated of the 50 dollars they paid. Pornography connoisseurs expressed disappointment with the all-too-predictable permutations of body parts, accessories, and animal acts. It is hard to shock us any more, and *Sex* represented a breakthrough only in the sense that the Clarence Thomas hearings were a breakthrough. The filth that used to be confined to the wrong side of town or the Playboy Channel can now appear on CNN and on the *CBS Evening News*, in Waldenbooks and in libraries started with grants from Andrew Carnegie.

Even Christian Americans are jaded, and the sale of a book portraying group sex and bestiality stirred little controversy. Libraries, however, are civic institutions that are generally thought to reflect the values of the community. I do not know how many public libraries decided to purchase *Sex*. Here in Rockford, the director of the public library stirred up the predictable controversy by making the predictable decision to buy the book. The library received about 20 requests, offset by 400 letters in opposition. By the rules of American democracy, the ayes have it, even when they are outvoted 20 to one, so long as the ayes represent fashionable opinion.

There was a public hearing at which various people pointed out that the book was pornographic, offended local standards, and possessed no redeeming social value. No one, in fact, defended the book on its merits, but the head of the library (and his supporters) insisted it was a free speech/free press issue, even though what was at stake was not the right to publish or distribute or look at (somehow "read" is not the right verb) the book. The only significant question concerned the proper use of taxpayers' funds. Some sort of compromise was reached—they bought the book but promised to restrict access—but the controversy illustrates certain features of the cultural battle that is being waged at the end of the millennium.

Put aside any consideration of the First Amendment, which was never meant to apply to local matters, and bracket, for the moment, the question of the book's merits or demerits, because the same tired arguments are used everywhere in the battle of the books that is being waged in libraries across the country as concerned citizens debate the appropriateness of teenage sex manuals or the use of the word "nigger" in *Huckleberry Finn*. Both sides in these debates see the library as a powerful instrument that can be used for public enlightenment or abused for moral corruption. The outcome of these battles, so it is believed, determines which side will stamp its image on the community. Will this nation be a Christian America, whose reading is limited to *Heidi*, *Pollyanna*, and the confessions of Pat Boone, or will it be the open society that reads *Justine*, *Tropic of Cancer*, and *Last Exit to Brooklyn*?

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That public libraries were established as educational institutions meant to elevate public taste above both Henry Miller and Pat Boone is almost never mentioned.

I had several discussions with Christians who did not want *Sex* in the library. (It is hard not to repeat Tiny Tim's retort to Johnny Carson, that he wanted to get sex out of the movies and put it back where it belonged—in the home.) When I asked each of them about their other attempts to influence library policy, they told me of previous controversies over questionable books. Had any of them actually asked the library to buy a book? Did their churches request books? Rockford is a heavily Lutheran and Catholic town. Were the works of Luther and Melanchthon available in German (and Latin) or even in translation? What about standard editions of the Church Fathers? St. Thomas? Did the library own a complete set of the Loeb classics (bilingual editions of Greek and Latin authors) or Trollope's novels or the recently published complete edition of Robinson Jeffers? Could one find standard editions of Hume and Locke? Could a freshman at a decent college do a credible term paper on any topic by using the library's resources?

The answer to all of the above is no. American Christians in this age of the world do not care for such things, neither the laity nor the preachers. They are too busy with stewardship, financial planning, and bingo. So long as the library does not positively offend them, they are content to let their taxes be squandered on best-selling novels and books, on rose gardening or travel. Libraries have long since ceased to fulfill their original function of providing good books. They are now media resource centers that are used to facilitate lifestyles. One day a librarian caught my ten-year-old daughter reading a book. The kind lady took her by the arm, led her over to a computer terminal, and taught her to play a video game.

I do not begrudge anyone her rose garden or erotic fantasies. What I do not understand is why libraries should receive tax funds to assist people with their foibles and hobbies. We do not subsidize movie theaters, bowling allies, or exotic dancers. If one were to make a moral distinction between the modern library and "Girls! Girls! Girls!" it would be in favor of the strip joint, where vice is not packaged as culture or civic duty but as a commodity bought on the open market. If people want to read Danielle Steel, they can buy her "books" for a few bucks at the checkout line in the supermarket, and if they have enough money to fly to Paris, they can spend 15 or 20 dollars on a guidebook.

I agree with the limited objectives of the book-burning fundamentalists who want to purge the libraries of selected filth, but these campaigns are based on the false assumption that there really is a "moral majority" in the United States. There is not. On the contrary, we have only minorities as defined by race, sex, religion, and lifestyle, and each of these minorities has a claim on our cultural institutions. Books in the library, the school curriculum, music on the radio are viewed as so many weapons in a civil war, and in the fighting, whatever sense of common culture we once had is torn to tatters by leftists, racists, decency activists, and civil libertarians. Shakespeare and Sophocles? Both racists, sexists, and classists. Hemingway and Fitzgerald? Anti-Semitic pagan pornographers. Faulkner is a bigot, but James Baldwin is homosexual. Who is left, in the end: Phyllis Wheatley? She is black, female, Christian, and moral. Too bad my ten-year-old daughter writes better.

No good can come of a political struggle over who can read what and where. If each church congregation in Rockford were to request the library to order great literary classics, two things would be accomplished: a large selection of important books would be available for the first time in the city's history, and the library would be unable to waste the people's money on the trivia and filth that are purchased automatically from wholesalers who make decisions for the illiterate acquisition librarians who order but do not read books. If the library refused 100 requests for Goethe or Bishop Berkeley, then it would be time to accuse the library of censorship. But the churches will not do anything like this, because they are not part of any culture that binds them either to the past or to the other minority groups within this society. Instead of working to improve the common culture, they are content to rail against the immorality of the "secular humanists." After decades of efforts to ban nasty books, rate movies, and put warning labels on records, the Tipper Gores of America have contributed nothing, literally nothing positive to our culture. If only we could take all the money wasted on "decency" (including the money sent to TV evangelists) and spend it on good books by living authors. We could dominate the best-seller lists and enable decent writers to earn an honest living outside universities. We would have the beginnings of a cultural counterrevolution that could bypass the corrupt political process and go straight to the hearts and minds of the American natives.

On the left, it was Antonio Gramsci and, to a lesser extent, Trotsky who understood the importance of culture and won the undying affection of New York intellectuals who think that writing book reviews constitutes a serious political act. In the case of Trotsky, at least, concern with culture was on a plane only slightly higher than for the vulgar Marxists (e.g., Mike Gold) who judged literature and art according to simple ideological rules. Fiction, according to this interpretation, was propaganda with a story line. The so-called conservatives who have taken to railing against the culture have followed the Trotskyist line, cannot conceive of a good film directed by a Communist, and page rapidly through popular novels, looking for the "family values" that are conspicuously absent in their lives.

This word "culture," as potent a talisman as it is in politics, derives some of its power from the multiple senses in which it is used. We speak of the "Hopi culture," of people who have or have not got culture, and even of bacteria culture. Is there a thread that runs through all these usages or is culture simply one of those words with several unrelated meanings, like "gimlet" (a cobbler's tool, a drink with gin and lime) or "leaves" (departs, more than one leaf)?

The first thing an English speaker thinks of when he hears the world culture is the sense in which Matthew Arnold used the word to mean something like the liberal arts, "the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world." In popular usage, Goethe and Bellini represent culture or, at least, "high culture" as sometimes distinguished from "pop culture."

Anthropologists, however, have appropriated the term to mean nothing less than the object of their inquiry. If sociology could be defined as the study of "society," then anthropologists, in marking the boundaries of their discipline, devised

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culture by way of analogy. There are dozens of anthropological definitions, beginning with that of E. B. Tylor, who introduced the word from German. Reaching not quite at random, one might use Paul Bohannan's lucid and elegant formula to illustrate this usage. Bohannan calls culture "a summary of behavioral phenomena" and later elaborates on this theme: "Culture, as it is acquired with the growth of the personality, becomes the *medium* of that personality. You cannot swim without water, and water is the medium of swimming; you cannot paint a picture without paint, and paint becomes the medium for expressing the message of the picture. The difference between culture and personality is the same as the difference between the medium and content of a picture."

There is a wide gap between culture as medium and culture as art, but fundamentally Tylor and Arnold were attempting to describe, if not the same set, then at least overlapping sets of phenomena. Both were influenced by German usage, and in German *Kultur* is seen in its educational aspect. To understand the root sense, however, one has to know Latin (as both Arnold and Tylor did) as well as German.

Latin *cultura* derives from the verb *colere*, which means to till or take care of a field or garden plot. *Cultura* is, therefore, tillage, and in an extended sense it can refer to the care and nurture of various things: fields (agriculture), grapes (viticulture), and bees (apiculture). In English we still speak of culturing pearls or bacteria, but the more relevant and lively derivative word is "cultivate." One can cultivate a field or a taste for good wine and good music.

If the root meaning of culture means something like the fostering or nurturing of growth, what is it that is being grown in the medium of culture, either in the high art sense or in the anthropological sense? Bohannan supplies the answer:

> Into every culture and every civilization, year after year, hordes of uncultured "barbarians" descend in the form of newborn babies. In every society a major—indeed, an overwhelming—amount of social energy must be spent in making cultured creatures out of this human plasm. . . . The habits that are acquired by youngsters are part of the culture in accordance with which they are brought up. In one sense, the habits *are* the culture: if all the habits of all the people were changed, the culture would have changed.

The object of culture, its product, are human beings who have acquired the habits that are necessary for life in their society. More specifically, it is their character or (to use a more technical-sounding word) their personality that is formed by the culture.

Some aspects of human culture are, more or less, universal. However, family, law, religion, and art are abstract and generic categories, and the reality of human life is in the gritty details: the bickering among a man's two wives, the judge's wig and the archaic language of the common law, the life-and-death struggles over communion in two kinds or whether one crosses oneself from left to right or right to left. In the case of character, too, there are quasi-universals: the intemperance that leads to murder, theft, and incest, variously defined, is frowned upon, while bravery in war and care for children are generally esteemed. But a brave man of Bohemia or Bali might be regarded as a coward in Montenegro or Texas, and a faithful Irish father who spends most evenings in the pub might not receive high marks among English Methodists or American Lutherans.

Of the catalogue of virtues that occupies so much of Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea*, some of them have a familiar ring in English. Courage, truthfulness, and justice can fairly represent what the Greek philosopher was trying to discuss, but it is harder in the case of *megalopsychia*, often translated as "pride" but without any of the negative connotations. This virtue is a greatness of soul, whose opposites are humility and undue vanity. A modern Christian or post-Christian can conceive of a kind of pride that steers a course between Poo Bah and Uriah Heep, but it is hard even to grapple with the classic Greek virtue, *sophrosyne* (temperance, self-control), for which we lack not only the specific word but even the general language and context for a discussion.

Culture, in general, produces character, in general, as well as those universal traits of human nature, but it is specific cultures that form the habits (whose plural is character) of men and women in real societies and give rise to concrete and historically bound conceptions of right and wrong. Change the habits, says the anthropologist, and you have changed the culture; but, says the political reformer, change the culture and you change the habits and character of the people.

Of the various institutions of culture, none is more powerful than religion. By its rituals and according to its rules, the primary stages of life are marked: birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. It is through religion that human beings are joined with their ancestors and their unborn descendants in a communion that is the largest community, and it is through the rites and practices of religion that the dreadful powers of the universe can be pleased, appeased, propitiated. To the pious, a sentence of excommunication or a religious curse, because it reaches beyond the grave, holds terrors more fearful than death. The law can take away property and liberty, even life, but churches (or the priests or the gods themselves) have the power of binding and loosing souls.

Christian churches still play an important role in forming the character not just of "Christian America" but also of pagan Europe, where a great many practicing nonbelievers grow up hearing the stories and taking part in the major festivals. De-Christianized Europe is still a province, although much dilapidated, of Christendom. The French film *Cousin, Cousine* pays a cynical, backhanded compliment to the power of Catholic culture by portraying a Parisian family that spends Christmas Eve watching midnight Mass on television, while the cousins are betraying their spouses in the back bedroom.

I do not wish to minimize the importance of formal indoctrination, but catechism classes provide nothing more than a shorthand summary of what the child is imbibing from other sources: from sermons, from conversations with parents and other church members, and from learning and internalizing the magic words of creed and prayer. In most Christian societies, the arts of painting, music, and poetry were enlisted into the service of the church. Frescoes and stained glass windows tell the great stories for those who do not read, and sacred hymns use verse and music to convey a message more powerfully than any sermon or list of questions. The history of the church can be traced in the hymns of Venantius Fortunatus, Martin Luther, and the Wesleys, and the first serious music written in

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what became the United States were the hymns composed by Moravian musicians for their religious communities.

But the most powerful tool of Christian indoctrination, from the very beginning, has been the collection of texts we still call, in English, the Bible. One of the earliest Christian conversion stories is the account of the Ethiopian eunuch who had gone to Jerusalem to worship. On his way back, the Ethiopian, reading the prophecies of Isaiah, was overheard by the apostle Philip, who explained that "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter" was a reference to Jesus.

The Christian character is formed by reading, hearing, and interpreting stories. Jesus himself couched his messages in the form of scriptural quotations and striking parables. Some Christians, from the very beginning, have wanted to purify their faith of the taint of Jewish history, traditions, and "superstition," and one of the most important early heretics, Marcion, based his sect exclusively on Luke and Paul. A Christianity purified of Jewish stories and superstitions was the desire of Thomas Jefferson and many other Enlightenment *philosophes*, who regarded the moral teachings of Jesus as statements of universal benevolence and justice.

The Christian ideal, divorced from Jewish tribalism, was Locke and Kant in the form of beatitudes and parables, and that is, more or less, the Christianity of the mainline churches in Europe and the United States. "Great God I'd rather be a pagan suckled on a creed outworn." Half of the worst damage done to the peoples of the world in recent centuries has been inflicted under the banner of a Christian sentimentalism that rips Christ's provocative and paradoxical pronouncements out of context and treats them like a guidebook for everyday life.

It is necessary, always, to keep in mind that Jesus was addressing himself to an ancient tribal people, as parochial, narrow-minded, and bigoted as a Greek polis or a Calabrian village. But, quite apart from the context it provides, the Old Testament gives us a portrait of a "primitive" society, rooted in worship of God and organized according to principles of kinship and clan.

It really should not matter much to a Christian whether the portrait of social life contained in the early books of the Old Testament is historically accurate or a later idealized conception. By accepting these stories as Holy Scripture and in committing them to memory, we are slowly molded according to a patriarchal pattern of life that emphasizes familial integrity.

The "higher" morality of Christianity turns to poison when it is ripped from its solid roots in kinship and nationality. "He that loveth father or mother better than me is not worthy of me" makes sense only in a family-centered culture. Repeated out of context, it is an invitation to break the commandment "honor thy father and thy mother."

The Gospel's injunctions on forgiveness and compassion, uprooted from the solid earth of Judaic law, become an ethic of suicidal defeatism. While it is possible to construct a pacifist/nonviolent ethic out of selected passages of the New Testament, the Old Testament throws a bucket of cold water on such fantasies: Rabbi Jacob Neusner observed last December in *Chronicles* that in the Torah "justice overrides sentimentality" and added that this justice allows room for execution, war, and self-defense.

The real culture of Christendom is international, in preaching "the unity of faith and the bonds of love," but also national, tribal, and clannish in its stories of warring Jewish kindreds who were only unified in their hatred of the Gentiles. A Christian who is not metaphorically a Jew is only a reciter of creeds whose heart and mind have not been nourished on the living record of one nation's love-hate relationship with its God.

Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike, we are all people of the book, and not only because we trace our spiritual ancestry from the Old Testament. To a great extent, our culture is the books we read, mere secular works of history, philosophy, and literature as much as the sacred Scriptures we hear read on holy days. Ultimately, the censorship controversies in America form a skirmish line that marks the boundaries between warring ethical visions. For Christians and Jews, it must be a losing battle, because it is always fought according to the enemy's rules: openness, majority rule, impartiality, notions that are poison to any vital religious tradition claiming to represent the truth.

Unfortunately—and this is cause for more dismal reflections—few Christians today are part of Christendom, that civilization of knives and forks, Dante and Bach. At best, they read C. S. Lewis or Francis Schaeffer. My son once won a gift certificate to a Logos bookstore, and try as we might, we could not find one real book, apart from the Bible, in the whole place.

If Christians want to do something about the moral state of the nation, they might begin by setting their own houses in order. If they feel they really must deal with public institutions, then let them swamp the libraries with so many orders for good books that there will be no time or money for Madonna. But on the whole, they ought to concentrate on setting up their own libraries and filling them with the classics of Christendom. They might proceed to straighten out their wretched seminaries, which, at best, are turning out well-intentioned illiterates. Instead of throwing their money away on expensive video series for teenagers (who uniformly make fun of them), let them establish solid Bible study classes in which the learning of scriptural languages (Hebrew and Greek) is encouraged.

Ultimately, as the existentialists used to insist, each human being, by behaving as he does, is setting an example to the world. If decent and moral human beings care about the culture of the United States, they had better start spending their money on the good books that are being written by living authors who are forced to spend most of their time teaching, instead of writing, in order to feed and clothe their families.

Brighten the Corner Where You Are is the title of a recent book by Fred Chappell. It is good advice, and the best thing my readers could do is to go out and buy ole Fred's books, as well as the books of fiction, verse, history, and philosophy written by our other contributors. I am often told by *Chronicles*' readers that they have read my book in the library. Thanks for nothing. A man spends five years on a project and sells less than a thousand copies, because his friends and well-wishers go to the library. If a serious novel sells 5,000 copies, it is a triumph, and a book of verse is a sensation if it sells more than 500. The crazies not only control most of the grant money in America, they also buy most of the serious books. So long as "conservatives" who profess their faith in the free market are content to get their culture from Masterpiece Theatre and public libraries, the future will not belong to us. c

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The Ingersoll Prizes

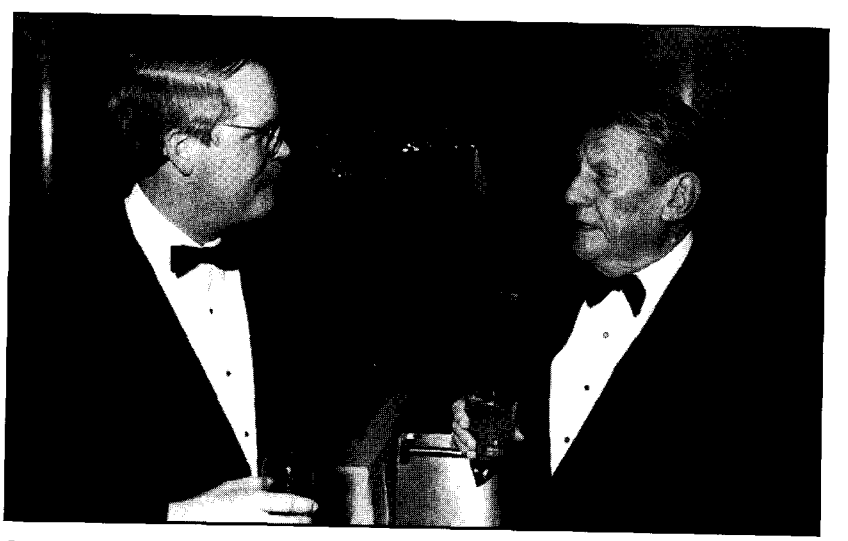
Tenth Presentation

1992

From the left: Dr. Thomas Fleming, executive secretary of the Ingersoll Prizes; Mrs. Muriel Spark, recipient of the T. S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing; Dr. Walter Burkert, recipient of the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters; and Dr. John Howard, president of the Ingersoll Foundation, on November 12, 1992, at the awards banquet in Chicago.

Mrs. Muriel Spark

Dr. Walter Burkert



Institute president Dr. Allan Carlson (left) with Mr. Edson Gaylord, chairman of Ingersoll International.

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OBSERVATIONS AFTER TEN YEARS

by Edson I. Gaylord

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The questions I ask myself from time to time are: What is the Ingersoll Milling Machine Company doing with its own philanthropic organization? What does Ingersoll have to do with philanthropy at all? We are engaged in a highly technical international machinery business, which is extremely demanding because of surging technology, because there are competitors from all over the world for the customers upon which we depend, and because, by the unalterable nature of our products, we sell our wares in markets that swing between boom and bust. This requires a very high degree of investment in money and in people's lifetime commitments. We at Ingersoll are preoccupied with the task of being better than our competitors in order to survive. Where does philanthropy come in?

The answer is straightforward. We are in the business of giving away money because our government passed laws that put all of industry in the philanthropy business. We are a private company, with a very small number of stockholders. Before any dividends can be paid to the owners, our largest stockholder, the U. S. government, demands its dividend, which is many times the amount of dividend the owners have ever taken from the company.

As you know, a company can make charitable gifts before it pays taxes, but this advantage turns into a disadvantage if the owners make their own gifts from their dividends after taxes. Every dollar of support from a company is worth a dollar, but this is not true of the same dollars of support from the individuals who own the company. This is a poor reason for America's industrial companies to engage in activities remote from their proper business, but that is what has happened. This is how the Ingersoll Foundation came into being, and while our foundation bears little resemblance to its counterparts, like the Rockefeller or MacArthur foundations, its reason for being is the same.

Perhaps a more difficult question to answer is how the Ingersoll Foundation got involved with the Ingersoll Prizes. How does a hard-hitting commercial enterprise with plenty of problems of its own find itself supporting prizes for creative literature and scholarly letters?

When the Ingersoll Foundation was first formed and when it first had money in its coffers, the chief executive and principal shareholder of Ingersoll was Robert Gaylord, who was a great champion of freedom, capitalism, and the United States of America. He anguished over the growing popularity of the false claims made by liberal opponents of capitalism. The Ingersoll Foundation, under his leadership, sponsored and conducted a series of meetings extending over several years in which we met with Ingersoll employees, members of the Rockford community, and other guests to examine the benefits of the capitalistic system against the claims of its opponents, as well as the source and nature of man's individual rights. The program was unique in that we did not set out to influence a great number of people we did not know (and who did not know us) as to the virtues of the capitalistic system; rather, we explored these critical issues with friends. The results were impressive, and a sizable group of people increased their knowledge of the free-market system and thus improved their ability to influence others.

The disappointment came from the fact that while this was going on, it became clear that economic understanding of the free system would not, by itself, insure the future of a free society and its free markets. All around, there was a change in values and in the behavior of Americans. We became more and more aware that the real issues had more to do with morality. The Ingersoll company cannot be successful in other than a free-market economy; neither can it be successful if the people who work for the company are not trustworthy and cooperative, do not have pride in work well done, and are not self-reliant and willing to submit to the rules and standards of our society.

It was then we asked the Rockford Institute for advice on how our foundation might help to reverse cultural trends and to reestablish, in some way, integrity, self-discipline, and cooperation as respected norms. Of all the ways that a people are molded in their behavior, we chose books. I do not believe I have to defend this choice with this group, but it is clear that if people are going to change behavioral patterns, this will not come about from newspaper articles or television spots. The rethinking of life's priorities is far more apt to be stimulated and guided by books of wisdom. Books are not dusty volumes on a library shelf; they are the most powerful opinion-makers in the world, and they are forever there for those who seek the truth. And so it was our decision that we would find a way to honor those who have written profound truths about the values that society must cherish to remain free.

We were awed by the prospect of such a long-term effort. The only reason strong enough to induce the decision we made was the conviction that our culture is in trouble, that the very existence of our free society is dependent on reversing its moral decline, and that the most enduring and powerful way to influence thought is in books. Indeed, we were so awed by the prospect of such an endeavor whose long-term results can probably never be measured that we decided to state our purpose as simply as possible and then get on with it. Only after ten years does it now seem appropriate to add anything to our statement of purpose.

Many of you have been here to see the Ingersoll Prizes awarded year after year. You are all the best judges of whether the efforts of the Ingersoll Foundation have been beneficial. The literary world has treated the past recipients of the Ingersoll Prizes with great honor; perhaps through these awards we have had some part in influencing other skilled spokesmen of our age to write of human virtue. If so, our work has been successful. c

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Edson I. Gaylord is chairman of Ingersoll International. This address was given in Chicago last November 12, on the 10th anniversary of the Ingersoll Prizes.

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LIVING WITH CULTURE

by Muriel Spark

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

One of the best things in life for a writer who sets out to be an artist is to be appreciated by people whose opinions are generally respected and valued. That is the happy condition in which I find myself this evening, and I thank the directors of the Ingersoll Foundation and the Rockford Institute. I thank all of you for this expression of support.

I am particularly happy to be here tonight at this celebration. I want to tell you what happened the last time I received an award of comparable importance, many years ago, in Italy. The *Italia Prize* was awarded for a musical adaptation on radio of one of my novels. I shared the prize with the adaptor and the composer. Together we traveled from London to Verona where, in a magnificent castle, the prizes were handed out. The audience was composed of prominent townspeople and personalities from the international community of arts and letters, all dressed in formality and grandeur. A banquet was to follow in our honor.

So, after the prize-giving everybody left, but we three prizewinners stood looking at each other in the empty castle hall while slowly the lights went out. A guardian came and told us to go away. Finally, we three went to a restaurant for our supper, which was a very merry one. Obviously the organizers of the banquet had completely forgotten about us. It was not till next morning that our invitations arrived at our hotels. Plainly there had been a hitch, but the amazing thing was that we, the guests of honor, were never missed—not that evening, nor ever.

Well, this time, here I am. Here, I am proud and relieved to add, we both are.

As a recipient of the award that takes its name from T. S. Eliot and that, in the hands of the Rockford Institute, seeks an ethical consensus rooted in the fundamental ideas of Western culture, I was prompted to look back on Eliot's writings on ethical and social questions and in particular on his book *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, first published in 1948. It was strange and haunting to look back on Eliot's work almost 40 years after I had studied him so closely. It was haunting because of his continued relevance, the immediacy of his thought. Eliot was a prophet. What he had to say about the decline of Western culture in 1948 is valid today in an even sharper sense than he could have intended for his time.

By culture Eliot meant not only our art, music, and literature. He meant everything we do as a community, our customs and habits, our national events, "the way of life of a particular people living together in one place." He wrote that culture is not merely the sum of several activities but a way of life. He defined culture as the development of every activity of the human race. He contended that our culture arose specifically from religion. Whether we can accept its perpetuation in religion or not, there is no doubt a strong spiritual element in what we call culture today. Again, in Eliot's words, "Culture is something that must grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time."

And yet, over 40 years later, there would be no way of accepting, far less realizing, Eliot's formula for the transmission of a civilized culture. Eliot's utopia called for a spiritual elite, an aristocracy of taste, learning, manners, and morals. Nothing of that kind can now occupy the mind of any reasonable, educated, and full-blooded human being. Eliot's analysis of the decline in ethical and aesthetic standards that he observed in the world around him was brilliant. But no one who fully loves life could possibly, now, accept his solution.

An American critic, the late Dwight Macdonald, whose writings on the subject of mass culture were respected by Eliot, also treated the deterioration of cultural standards. In his book of 1962, *Against the American Grain*, what Dwight Macdonald called Masscult and Midcult, he equally deprecated. He objected to the pressures of Hollywood on our spiritual lives and to the disintegrating effects of popular literature and television on what he called High Culture. But Macdonald offered a solution that Eliot himself described as an alternative to his own. "The mass audience," Macdonald wrote, "is divisible, we have discovered—and the more it is divided, the better. Even television, the most senseless and routinized expression of Masscult (except for the movie newsreels), might be improved by this approach."

Dwight Macdonald, in fact, finally refused to accept the masses as anything but an abstract. In his support he cited Kierkegaard's rejection of "the public" as a concrete reality. Our cultural activities and our messages are addressed to groups of people. He foresaw the possibility that, in his own words, "our new public for High Culture becomes conscious of itself and begins to show some *esprit de corps*, insisting on higher standards and setting itself off—joyously, implacably—from most of its fellow citizens, not only from the Masscult depths but also from the agreeable ooze of the Midcult swamp." As you see, I have only been able to skim the surface of a vast subject to which the nature of the Ingersoll award gives rise; it concerns the protection of our human standards, the spiritual lives of our societies.

Speaking for myself I find that both high culture and moral philosophy are too often in the hands of people, who, while they have excellent judgment, have a limited sense of humor. The arts of ridicule and satire can be employed to demolish vulgarity, stupidity, crude and cruel behavior. Ridicule is a strong and effective weapon. It should, I think, be studied as a means of expressing an honest literature in the world today.

For myself, moreover, I cannot dismiss any manifestation of mass culture *en bloc*. We should always observe; we should find what is preservable and precious among the welter of cul-

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Muriel Spark is the author, most recently, of Curriculum Vitae, *an autobiography of her early life. She was the 1992 recipient of the Ingersoll Foundation's T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing, for which this was her acceptance speech.*

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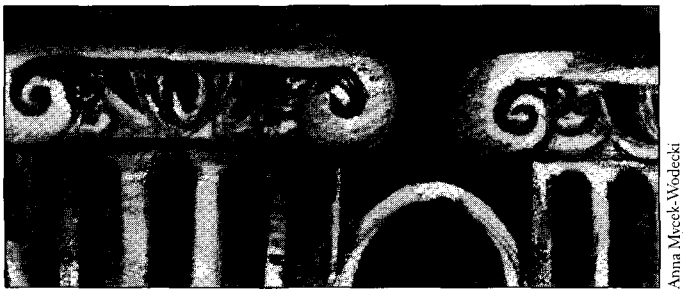
tural phenomena with which we are constantly bombarded. This needs self-discipline, it needs self-training on the part of those gifted with ingenuity of approach and with comprehension. Culture, after all, concerns the human spirit. A too narrow and severe discrimination can tend to annihilate ourselves, everything around us. And all to no effect.

Once in one of my novels I was drawn into writing a sermon. Into the mouth of the preacher I naturally put what he might be expected to say. But I added one strong conviction of my own that I find relevant to repeat here: "In whatever touches the human spirit, it is better to believe everything than nothing." c

CLASSICS—PAST IDEOLOGY AND PERSISTENT REALITY

by Walter Burkert



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

This year the Ingersoll Foundation has decided to present the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters to a professor of classics. Amidst joy and gratitude, this will bring to the fore some of the uneasiness that has been associated with the word and concept of "classics" for a long time, an uneasiness that seems to shift between defense, nostalgia, and resignation. Indeed the claim implied in the concept of "classical" has come under continuous attack during the whole of this century, and if from time to time the attacks seem to die away, this may be due to the impression that the victim is finally dead.

Apparently the claim of "classical" is difficult to maintain for any cultural production these days, whether in literature, art, or philosophy. The word was coined to signify what belongs to a category of value beyond dispute, what is distinguished by a generally recognized and invariable standard, an authoritative model of achievement. This status had been conferred on ancient Greek and Roman culture, or at least on certain Greek and Roman writers, poets, philosophers, and historians, and on Greek and Roman works of art and architecture in past generations since the Renaissance; their praise has resounded through the centuries, and all sorts of copies and imitations fill our museums and libraries and even the streets and public places in our cities.

But it is evident that classical art of the traditional kind has lost its immediate appeal, that it has had little impact on what constitutes modern or postmodern arts and fashions; that contemporary literature has mostly pursued forms other than classical lyrics or classical drama, let alone epic, which has been extinct for a long time; that the "end of history" has been proclaimed recently, preceded by the end of classical historiography; and that science has reached levels of sophistication that ancient philosophers and scientists would hardly have dreamt of or even considered desirable. Most violent attacks, I come to learn, have been directed in this country against the cultural inheritance of old Europe, including its ancient background, attacks against the preponderance of "dead white men"; and the ancient Greeks, being the oldest of these, should be more dead than any of them. We are living in a multicultural society amidst rapid and worldwide communication, with multifarious and changing lifestyles, tendencies, fashions, and slogans. In this whirlpool the European heritage is dwindling, let alone the heritage of ancient Greece. And yet the Nobel Prize winner in literature of 1992, Derek Walcott, a native of the Caribbean who has remained consciously indebted to Afro-American culture, has entitled his principal work (completed in 1990) *Omeros*. Homer, the most ancient of the ancient Greeks, still appears to be around, to be not so dead after all.

If I take the occasion to look back on my own work, which I have pursued for about 40 years, I find that in a way I have always been sidestepping the "classical" aspect of classics. Taking for granted the rational achievements of the Greeks, I have been mainly interested in what was before and beside rationalism. A book that made a profound impression on my studies was *The Greeks and the Irrational*, published in 1951 by E. R. Dodds. Thus in my own book *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (1962) I tried to understand what was there before geometry, before mathematics and astronomy, before science, and I found perplexing miracles, shamans, primitive but consistent rules of life, sayings of wisdom striving to encompass the whole of the cosmos.

I went even farther back into prerational behavior and symbolism with the study of religious ritual, delving down to the Paleolithic and beyond in the continuum of life, guided by ethology as taught by Konrad Lorenz; I pursued the strange fascination with death and violence in sacrificial ritual, which means to slaughter animals at altars stained with blood for serene and immortal gods. Why must religion be that cruel and sanguinary? The answer seemed to lie in the reversal of the question, as the ineradicable cruelty of life seems to be realized, to be transformed and channeled into an order of the sacred through religion. I doubt whether I would dare to write a book such as my *Homo Necans* (1972) today, a synthesis that is only possible if one avoids staring at every pitfall or precipice that threatens the advance of the argument. Still, Greek literature, which we used to call "classical"—Homer and tragedy most of all, the pre-Socratic philosophers, and Plato—never receded into the background; on the contrary,

Walter Burkert is a professor of classical philology at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. He was the 1992 recipient of the Ingersoll Foundation's Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters, for which this was his acceptance speech.

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there seemed to be a chance to better understand it by seeing tragedy and sacrificial ritual in their mutual relation, by perceiving Greek religion in its compelling character without losing sight of its dark and so-called primitive antecedents. This meant situating "classical" ancient civilization within the horizon and against the background of more general anthropology. If there is progress in the "history of the mind," in the accumulation and processing of knowledge, and in the basic assumptions that are to conform with reality, the basic problems of life with which humans are confronted seem not to have changed too much in the past 30,000 years.

After my general account of *Greek Religion* (1977) and further explorations of myth and ritual in my Sather Lectures, entitled *Structure and History* (1979), I have spent time getting better acquainted with the ancient Near East, searching once more for the historical antecedents and parallels of "classical" Greek achievements. The outcome is a book on archaic Greece with the title *The Orientalizing Revolution* (1992). It is perhaps more than coincidence that this recent work of mine evolved parallel to the book whose very title has had quite an impact on classical studies in America, Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*. I find the designation "black" preposterous, as far as antiquity is concerned; but it is arguable that Greece, ancient Greece, belonged to Oriental rather than to "Western" civilization; at any rate, the Greeks are the most Eastern of Westerners. In a way these Oriental studies lead back to fields treated in my earlier Pythagorean investigations of seers, oracles, and prescientific wisdom about the divine and the cosmos. Even here, though, "classical" Greece is seen in a fresh light, particularly what the Greeks have brought to light and what, in some way or other, will abide with thinking man.

To give some examples: philosophy, mathematics, and physics are Greek words, Greek concepts discovered by the Greeks from the 6th to the 4th centuries B.C. Yet it is clear that Oriental forms of literature and science, proven to have existed more than 1,000 years before any possible date for Homer, did not only anticipate discoveries in mathematics and astronomy but led toward Greek natural philosophy in a double way, through wisdom and literature as well as through cosmogonic myth. Both traditions, wisdom and cosmogony, were taken up in a form remarkably close to Oriental antecedents in the works of Hesiod, about 700 B.C.; detailed correspondences with Hittite mythology wrought a sensation when they were discovered more than 40 years ago. There are repercussions of both wisdom and cosmogony even in Homer's *Iliad*. Later on the so-called pre-Socratics, in the 6th and 5th centuries, continued the trends of Homer and Hesiod with the addition of empirical knowledge and further Eastern impulses. But there is a new stance and a new spirit, an aspiration toward the absolute, reflection based on the Greek language but going far beyond in consequence.

The book of Heraclitus, about 500 B.C., must have been quite close to more ancient collections of "wisdom" in its form, such as the proverbs of Solomon, which we read in the Holy Bible. Let me quote the beginning of Solomon's book: "The sayings of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel . . . in order that they may give intelligence to the inexpert . . . and even a wise man may hear them to increase his wisdom . . ."; contrast the beginning of Heraclitus: "This is the formula of Heraclitus, son of Bloson, the Ephesian: Of this formula, which is eternal, men prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when they have heard it for the first time." This sounds like a scornful parody. "This is what the inexpert may learn, and the wise man too"—this is Solomon, optimistic and naive in his appraisal of knowledge. "This is what people do not understand even if it is burning on their nails"—this is Heraclitus in his paradoxical arrogance. Why such arrogance? The word translated as "formula" is *logos* in Greek, which means word, speech, account, calculation, and proportion.

Later in his book, we find among the sayings of Heraclitus: "All things are exchangeable for fire and fire for all things, as goods for gold and gold for goods." This is a simile taken from market economy; it is labeled "Heraclitus' theory of fire" in all manuals of the history of philosophy. Some earlier interpreters, in the wake of Aristotle, found the formulation of Heraclitus queer; Heraclitus must have meant, they presumed, that fire is a substance that takes on various states, so there should be modification, not "exchange"; the simile appears to be incorrect, misleading, "archaic." Strangely enough, if seen from modern physics Heraclitus' sentence will look much more intelligent. Our modern specialists constantly talk about subatomic particles exploding into other particles or coalescing from these, with energy emitted or absorbed, with calculable relations of mass and energy in each of the processes. "All things are exchangeable for fire and fire for all things, as goods for gold and gold for goods"—energy instead of mass, mass instead of energy. This is not to say that Heraclitus had the faintest idea of subatomic physics, but that he was stating a principle of change that constitutes reality, not just the permanence of stones or of other things of the kind, or even of gods, but a formula, a *logos*; it is the case that such change can be expressed in a formula, a *logos*, which means speech, account, calculation, and proportion. Thus according to Heraclitus it is the *logos* that is permanent—and somehow he was right, difficult though it may be to resume his insight in a single modern phrase; we can hardly replace physics with "sayings" of wisdom any more.

Or take Heraclitus' quasi-contemporary Parmenides with his paradoxical thesis that "the naught," "nothing," does not exist and his startling consequence that there is no change at all, that it is impossible for anything to come into existence or perish totally, because this would mean that it had risen from nothing or would dissolve into nothing. How right he was we realize today with desperation, as we try to get rid of all the refuse our civilization is producing—worst of all, the radioactive refuse: there simply is no possibility of dissolving it into nothingness, in spite of all that fantasy or speculation might suggest. Parmenides intuitively had the impulse to formulate the most basic laws both of logic and of natural science, the exclusion of contradiction and the preservation of being—of mass or energy, in our view. He tried to prove his insight from an analysis of the Greek verb "to be," which implies persistence in contrast to "becoming," *esti* versus *genesis* or *physis*. This surely is not a compelling starting point for those who are ignorant of Greek. It seems more generally acceptable that Parmenides insisted "being" be in strict correspondence to "cognition" and to "speech": you can only come to know that which *is*, and to say something meaningful is to say what *is* the case, to pronounce being. This correspondence of *logos*—to come back to the word used by Heraclitus—and "being" has remained fundamental for the whole of Greek philosophy.

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I have the impression that it is here that our world has lost contact with what was taken for granted by our civilization for so many centuries. Physical reality has proved to be much more complex and enigmatic than our habits of speaking and thinking had presupposed; correspondingly, in our more and more refined debates on linguistics, hermeneutics, or semiology, plain reality, "that which is simply there," is found to evaporate. This also means that claims of factual truth seem to become more and more evanescent, as if arguments were just for self-indulgent edification or direct political fights and not for establishing what is the case. In the 50's, eminent classicists such as Walter F. Otto and Wolfgang Schadewaldt could still say that Homer's achievement was to reveal "being." Today, in the more modern and postmodern interpretations, self-reflecting structures are brought to light, texts refer to texts that can all be "deconstructed," or else the bias of ideologies is indicted—the interests involved in the production and reception of texts and all other cultural achievements. There is even the unmasked irruption of group interests, which try to dictate what must be true and what cannot be the case because it must not be.

I know we cannot get back to the ideal of "classical" man with classical learning, classical books, and a closed and classical world view in which everything is neatly and finally put in its place; "classical man" of this kind was living in quite another world than ours, if he ever was alive. We have consigned the *logos* to computers, which make it incredibly effective yet unintelligible (safe, specific details perceived by specialists of details), and to the media, where entertainment successfully masks the tyranny of money.

The study of humanity's evolution in history—and this finally is what classical scholars, for their part, try to do—may still encourage a fuller understanding of our world in which humans are confronted with each other and with reality, confronted with the strangeness of people and the strangeness of being, to be—one can hope—overcome by insight. The hope of Greek philosophers that it is possible to speak with intelligence about what is real should still persist, and even a Hellenist will acknowledge that this must not necessarily be done in Greek—although a lover of ancient Greek must be deeply grateful to the Ingersoll Foundation for calling attention to the classics. c

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Cathedrals

by Gloria Whelan

Rarely is it the surprise
of walking out
of the Cologne station
and beholding the Cathedral
beside you,
so close
you can touch it.

More often
it is like Chartres
levitating
above the wheat
fields of Beauce,
veiled and distant,
a mirage and God in it.

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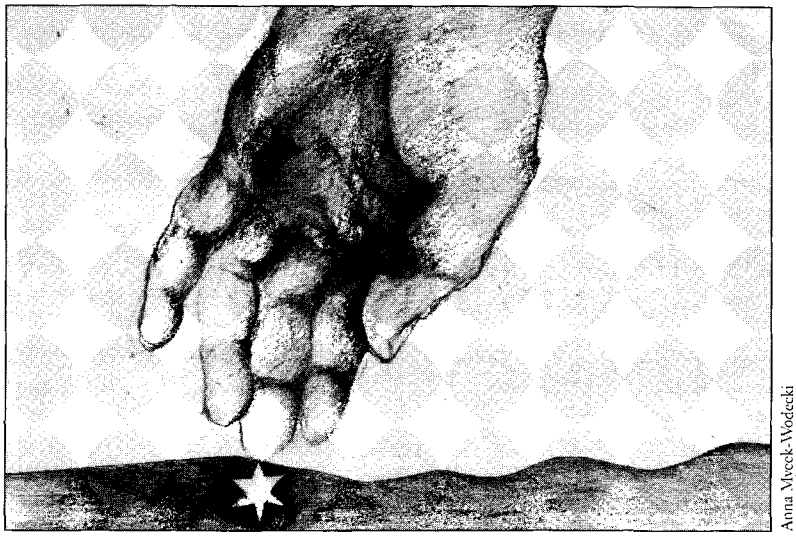
Work of Human Hands

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The priest had just closed the volume by Thomas à Kempis on the bookmark and put away what was left of the bottle of wine when the telephone rang. He answered it reluctantly and recognized Mrs. Corelli's voice on the line, begging him to hurry and saying that the doctor was already on his way. Rosa Corelli was a widow in her late 80's, who was driven to Mass every Sunday by her grandson, a married man in his 40's who came for her when the service was over; in the past six months she had suffered a series of attacks. The priest glanced at the clock that was beside the phone. It said nearly 11, and he felt sleepy and thickheaded. He promised Mrs. Corelli that he would come as quickly as he could, and hung up the receiver.

In the bedroom he put on his collar and shoes, his fingers working clumsily against the buttons and laces. The snowstorm had caused him to cancel a trip out of town, and for the first time in weeks he had been able to sit alone in the rectory and read, making notes for the book he was writing, without interruption. He was surprised to discover how late it was; also how much of the wine was gone. Wine was Father Hillary's sole luxury, in which he indulged himself regularly except during Lent. He had acquired a palate when he was studying in Paris at the Sorbonne, learning to discriminate among wines at the same time that he was mastering Augustine and Aquinas. His rule was to restrict himself to two glasses a night at supper, but this evening he had eaten from a tray table while reading *The Imitation of Christ* in his big armchair, so engrossed that he must have neglected to keep count of the glasses he had poured from the magnum bottle beside him. He finished finally with the shoes and collar and went to the vestibule for his coat, hat, and boots.

The glass panes inset in the outer door were frosted in patterns like cathedral windows where the heat from the forced-air system came up through the grate in the floor. The storm had eased away in great slow wheels to the east, leaving behind it a lake of bitter cold. Father Hillary opened the door and felt the night, like an entire world, rise up against him; the only sound was the creak of snow beneath the tires of a slowly passing vehicle. Above the almost lightless town, the stars shone with a brilliant intensity they had lacked in Princeton, New Jersey, and in France, where they had been obscured by a mixture of smoke and fog in pastel colors. His car was parked outside the garage with an extension cord running from under the hood to the electrical outlet just inside the garage door, which had jammed in its tracks in a halfway position; one of his parishioners had promised to come and repair it in the morning. He went to the car through the dry light snow that lifted in clouds about his boots, aware of the terrible cold against his heated cheeks. Once he set a foot down wrong, but managed to regain his balance without breaking stride in the snow.

The priest switched on the ignition and in the shine of the headlights unplugged the extension cord from the block heater. Then he got in behind the wheel again and drove across the wide snowy parking area to the street, where he continued for a couple of blocks before making a left turn toward the center of town. The engine had no warmth yet for the heater to pump; Father Hillary's breath fogged the windows and the lenses of the eyeglasses he needed to drive with. Ahead, the street dropped steeply down from one shelf of bungalows to the next, a slope of pale slippery ice descending to the hot colored lights of the bars at the heart of the downtown business district. The priest, though he was in a hurry, did not dare to drive very fast. When he reached the intersection at the foot of the hill, the light-box said DON'T WALK but the traffic-light above it remained green. The priest tapped the accelerator and depressed the signal lever for a left turn.

He drove with his left eye, the lens in front of the right one having become fogged suddenly. Father Hillary removed the glasses hastily, rubbed them on the lapel of his coat, and was attempting to return them to the bridge of his nose when an earpiece caught somewhere and they were snatched from his hand. They fell at his feet under the pedals and he lunged for

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them with the one hand while keeping the other on the wheel. The hand groped, and as he straightened up in the seat he saw through the frosty blur a red round light overhead. He jammed his foot on the brake, and felt an impact like a dull blow to the head. By the time he had the door open and stepped out onto the ice-covered street, a patrol car had arrived and children were piling out from the big station wagon, built like a truck, that had hit him. His own car had been spun completely around on the ice, so that it now faced uphill in the direction from which he had come. The priest could not believe that so many children had been riding in one vehicle. When all of them were out of it, they began to whoop and yell and stamp around in the street like red Indians, shouting, "Mommy's had an accident! Mommy's had an accident!"

Father Hillary went over to them, asking, "Are all of you children all right?" but they paid him no attention. The driver of the station wagon, a fat young woman in a quilted coat, stood talking to the police officer; as the priest turned toward them, he was approached by a second officer who wanted to know, "Are you hurt, Father?" He was a heavyset young man with a thin blond mustache whom the priest recognized as one of his more irregular parishioners. "I'm fine," Father Hillary told him. "Are you certain that none of the children is injured?"

The officer looked over his shoulder at the children, who went on stamping in circles and yelling while their mother continued to speak with the other policeman. "They'd damn sure be injured if they was my kids," he said. "Their mom says she's okay too. How about yourself, Father? Maybe you'd like a ride up to the hospital and kind of have yourself checked out?"

Something in his voice made the priest suddenly alert to what he was saying. The young man seemed uncertain of himself, a little hesitant. Beyond the uniformed figure, a constellation of blinking lights swam disconcertingly in a blur of colors. "My glasses," Father Hillary said, passing a hand downward over his face. "I left my eyeglasses in the car."

Instantly, the wide simple face of the policeman cleared, as though the weight of centuries had been lifted from him. "Your glasses! You bet, Father! You just stand right here where you're at now, while I go and find them for you."

The priest passed his hand again across his face, from left to right this time. A pain had started behind his temple and he felt light-headed and disoriented, as if he were awakening from a dream to some urgent obligation he found that he could not remember. "On the floor somewhere, underneath the wheel," he told the officer in a voice that sounded to him to have become detached from his body. "Thank you very much." His exploring fingers had discovered a raised place just in front of his right ear.

It took the young police officer, whose name Father Hillary managed finally to recall was Tymanski, less than a minute to find the missing spectacles. The right lens was badly cracked, but the priest was able to fill out the form Patrolman Tymanski gave him, and to read the one he exchanged it with the fat woman for. Her insurance company was located in Salt Lake City and the priest did not recognize the name she had written down, although her face was distantly familiar to him. Certainly she was not a member of his parish.

While the first officer measured distances with a steel tape, Patrolman Tymanski invited the priest and the woman in turn to sit with him in the squad car while he questioned them about the accident. Before, the woman, acting sullen, had seemed to avoid Father Hillary's eye, but now that she was speaking with Tymanski her voice became excited, and once the priest saw her gesture strongly in his direction as he sat waiting inside his own automobile. He was slightly nauseous, and the disoriented feeling had been displaced by a growing sense that something crucial was happening that he had momentarily forgotten but that he needed to be in touch with immediately. When Tymanski was through talking to the woman, he got out of his car and slowly walked over to the priest's. His face had a strange, twisted expression, as if one side of it were engaged in a critical struggle with the other side, and for a moment it seemed to Father Hillary that he was unable to speak. Then the face became reconciled with itself, growing suddenly smooth and featureless as a cheese as Patrolman Tymanski reached to touch the priest very gently on his right temple. "You are bleeding, Father," he said. "I will take you to the hospital in my car. The ambulance is on another call."

The priest startled at the touch as if he had received an electric shock. "Oh, the good Lord!" he cried. "Rosa Corelli has just had another seizure. I was on my way to her house when this happened. Will you please drive me there as fast as you can? The Lord willing, we won't be too late."

When they arrived at Rosa Corelli's house two minutes later, the ambulance was already drawing away from in front of the small fenced yard having just been dismissed by Doctor White, who stood in the open door with the recessed light at his back. The doctor, looking slightly disheveled, had on a faded blue parka worn shiny with age over a heavy sweater and held a knitted ski cap in his hand. His scant yellow hair was combed over a round red head and the thick lenses of his steel-rimmed glasses magnified the bloodshot whites of his eyes, which were merry and preternaturally bright. He was placing a wafer of breathmint in his mouth as the priest and the officer hurriedly approached him. "Take it easy, gentlemen," he said, "there's no point in hurrying now."

He stood aside for them to pass and shut the door behind himself when they were inside. "She had a little bit of a problem with the dosage I gave her, and panicked," Doctor White said. "She's feeling all right now. Go on in and talk to her, Father, but try and make it quick. I fixed her to where she ought to be asleep in fifteen or twenty minutes."

The priest crossed the parlor among the marble-topped tables, antimacassared chairs, and breakfronts crowded with porcelain and glass into the bedroom where the old woman lay on a high-standing oak bedstead under a quilted comforter. Her gray hair on the pillow appeared freshly set and her nightgown had been tied carefully at the throat with a piece of blue ribbon. Over the gown she wore a bed-jacket that maintained her head in a forward position, against the pillow, the black eyes open wide in a gray, eager face. From the glass half-filled with water on the bedside table and the firmness of the wrinkled cheeks, Father Hillary saw that both sets of false teeth had been set securely in place. One hand lay on top of the comforter and held a rosary. "Not yet, Father." Although the voice was strong enough, it seemed to the priest that it was the eyes, not the mouth, that actually spoke.

"No. Not yet, Rosa. But I'm going to anoint you all the same."

"Father, your head. You're bleeding."

"I had a small accident on my way over. No one was hurt,

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but that's why I was so slow in getting here."

The eyes closed while he touched her forehead and hands with the oil and recited the prayer for the sick. When he had finished, they opened again and resumed their steady gaze. "No one anointed Our Lord when He was dying," Rosa Corelli said.

"But He died innocent of sin. There was no need."

"He wouldn't drink the vinegar and water they offered Him."

"Because He was looking forward to drinking the new wine with His disciples in Heaven."

"Father," the old woman said, "there is a bottle of wine down there under the bed. Would you give me a little of it to drink before you go?"

The priest looked and saw the glint of green glass beneath the edge of the quilt. "Is that wise after you've taken your medicine, Rosa? Maybe I should ask the doctor first."

"Doctors don't know everything," Rosa Corelli said sharply. "Rinse this glass here, and take another for yourself from the bathroom."

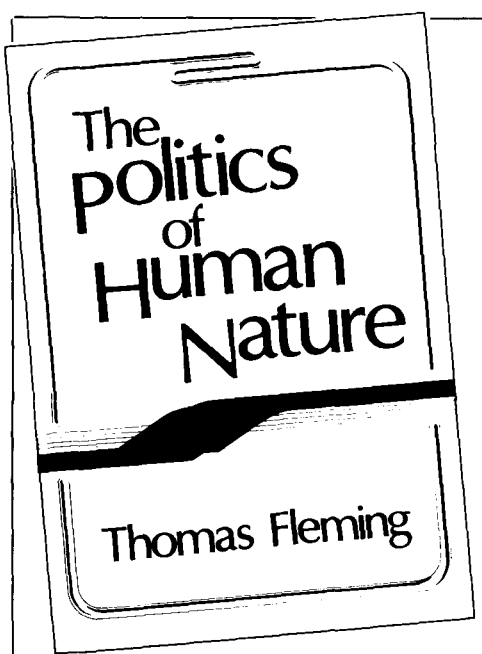
Father Hillary carried the glass into the bathroom and washed it under the hot-water tap. When he returned to the bedroom, Mrs. Corelli had slid the bottle clear of the bedskirts and propped the pillow higher against the headboard. He bent for the bottle, poured a small amount of the wine, and gave her the glass to drink from. "Where is your glass, Father?" the old woman asked.

"Oh, nothing for me, thank you," the priest answered quickly. The odor of the wine affected his stomach to the point where he was afraid he might need to return to the bathroom. He set the bottle on the floor again where he could not see it and concentrated on putting the idea of wine out of his mind. "When I was a girl in Italy," Rosa Corelli said drowsily, "nobody ever drank water, it made you sick, only wine. . . . Why don't the Protestants understand wine, Father?"

Father Hillary took the empty glass from her hand and replaced it on the table beside the bed. Then he helped her to resettle the pillow on the mattress and drew the comforter up to her chin. Already her breathing was becoming more regular as she slid toward her littler reward. The priest turned out the light and went back to the parlor, where Doctor White sat waiting in one of the overstuffed armchairs. He looked redder in the face than ever—from being overheated inside the heavy parka, the priest thought. "She's asleep now," he said. "Her grandson will be home from Salt Lake tomorrow afternoon. I'll look in on her in the morning to see if she needs anything."

The doctor nodded as he rose heavily from the chair. He took the woolen cap from the pocket of his coat and pulled it over his skull until the edge of it reached the tops of his ears and his yellow eyebrows. "She should do fine with the new medication now," he said. "Thank God, it wasn't serious. This time of the evening, a man isn't exactly at his professional best. 'No man knoweth the day or the hour'—isn't that how it goes, Father?"

He held the door wide in a broad gesture of professional courtesy, and the two men walked side by side under the penetrating stars to the doctor's car.



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More Than a Statue

by Thomas Fleming

"Fame is like a river, that beareth up things light and swoln, and drowns things weighty and solid."

—Francis Bacon

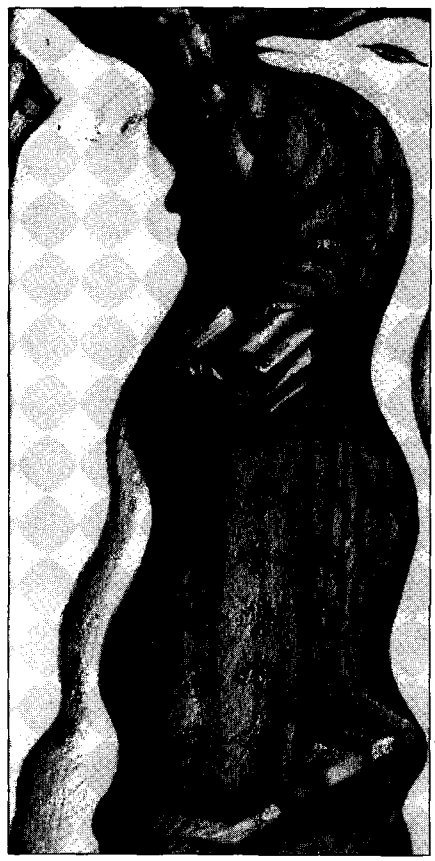
Simms: A Literary Life
by John Caldwell Guilds
Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press; 456 pp., $35.00

Selected Poems of William Gilmore Simms
edited by James Everett Kibler, Jr.
Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press; 426 pp., $50.00

◆

At the height of his career, William Gilmore Simms was ranked with the best writers produced by the United States. In the Northeast, his novels were considered inferior only to Cooper's, and there were many in the South who would have put him higher. As a man of letters, Simms was preeminent in the South, and his labors as editor, reviewer, and godfather gave him an influence that did not dissipate until years after his death. Despite the accolades he received in his lifetime—from Poe and Bryant among others—Simms was chiseled out of the literary pantheon in the course of this century and has endured the writer's ultimate disgrace: he is better known to scholars and historians than he is to readers. Even in his native state of South Carolina, he is little more than a statue and the original author of the state-history text used by the public schools.

Until fairly recently, I acquiesced in the general condemnation of Simms as a quaint Victorian of no more than historical interest. The novels most frequently pushed upon students, *The Yemassee* and *Eutaw*, are, at best, on par with Cooper and not the best of Cooper. But Simms is not without his admirers, and some of those admirers are scholars worth listening to: James Meriwether, Clyde Wilson, and the authors of the two books under review. After persuading me to read Simms' best novels, *Woodcraft* and *Katharine Walton*, bullying me into a fast trip through his letters, and nagging me into reviewing these books, Professor Wilson has forced me to the conclusion that Simms not only deserved the reputation he earned in his lifetime but ought to be considered one of the very few really significant literary figures of 19th-century America.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

I say literary figure rather than writer, because like the ancient Eratosthenes who won the nickname Beta for his almost first-rate accomplishments in a variety of fields, Simms succeeded at nothing perfectly. He is one of the first of the great frontier humorists, but Twain took the genre to higher literary heights; he is one of the best American verse satirists who ever wrote, but he lacks epigrammatic wit and occasionally falls back on conventional or even forced rhymes; as an editor he shone without having the money to pay contributors to the *Magnolia* or the *Southern Quarterly Review* or any of his other publishing projects doomed, from their very conception, to failure; he is perhaps as good a storyteller as this country ever produced, but his style is frequently diffuse, his syntax clumsy, and his taste too inclined to the macabre, the violent, and the sanguinary. Much of what he wrote, both in prose and verse, could just as well have been left unpublished, but at his best—and it is remarkable how often in his career he managed to hit a rich vein—he is unequaled in his ability to convey experience. Compared to Simms' best pages and chapters, Hawthorne seems a prissy puritan, Twain a mean-spirited village atheist, and Poe a clever dabbler, not really interested in the human stories that are the blood and marrow of literature. Even in his best work, Twain rarely succeeded in creating true and original characters; like Dickens, he lapses time after time into exaggeration or mere caricature. Simms, on the other hand, when he is not going through the motions of the conventional love story, has created a series of memorable characters—villainous ruffians, like Hellfire Dick, with a slim streak of decency, and the inimitable Captain Porgy, the erudite epicurean who is too fat to climb into the

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles.

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saddle but, for all that, a bold and enterprising soldier. Porgy—Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Falstaff rolled into one—is probably the most original character in 19th-century American literature and a gauge of defiance against anyone who thinks Simms "conventional."

Simms' most enduring legacy is his uneven series of novels written on the Revolutionary War as it was played out in South Carolina; it is an "epic story of America's battle for freedom and self-identity," as John Caldwell Guilds sums up the theme of *Woodcraft*. Professor Guilds has devoted much of his career to rehabilitating Simms' reputation, and this volume is a solid and lasting contribution to the scholarship on Simms and to American literary history. His judgment on the comparative worth of Simms' numerous and varied works is judicious and penetrating, and while Guilds is ruthless in detecting flaws, he is also just the sort of critic that Simms himself found in his friend James Henry Hammond, who could pick out the deficiencies in a work while admiring its general design and overall excellence.

If Guilds as an interpreter of Simms has a weakness, it is his attempt to portray the writer as a somewhat coldhearted egotist, insufficiently attentive to his wife:

> Though unconditionally loved and revered for almost three decades by his wife, Simms was so self-centered, and so preoccupied with his own disappointments and frustrations, that he often failed to be thoughtful and considerate in his relationship with her.

Most, if not all writers, have a streak of egotism and vanity—why else do they waste their time writing when they could be selling shoes or fleecing the public as journalists and politicians? Simms is not personally effusive, either in his letters or in his novels, but he is grief-stricken at the death of each of his children, giving the lie to social historians who have declared that the frequency of infant mortality deadened the hearts of parents. If he was not the perfect model of uxoriousness, by what standard are we judging him? Hemingway's? In truth, Guilds' evidence of coldness and neglect are almost all *argumenta ex silentio*, and on this basis few husbands could escape censure. One of Simms' really interesting qualities—and he shared it with Hammond as well as with certain other Southerners of the time—is a certain manliness and frankness. They were their own men in everything, free-thinking Christians in religion, reluctant to follow any man's lead, even Calhoun's. It falsifies our knowledge of the times to describe such men as sharing "a sense of alienation from Southern society," except in the etiolated sense that no first-rate man is a herd animal. There is an 18th-century quality to Simms and Hammond, and like Judge Pettigrew and Hugh Legaré (to name only two other Charlestonians) they belong as much to the world of Johnson and Gibbon as to the Romantic era.

Too much, in fact, has been written of Southern romanticism, and like all provincial cultures, South Carolina has always remained at least two generations behind the fashions. European visitors frequently noticed an austere, almost Puritanical streak in Charleston life, a sense of reserve that might be mistaken for coldness in a people less passionate. Even at the beginning of this century, Owen Wister instilled a strange combination of aloofness and heartiness into the central characters of his novel *Lady Baltimore*.

Guilds' principal mistake lies in his refusal to take Simms' poetry seriously. In a superbly concise introduction to his first selection of Gilmore Simms' verse, James Kibler sets out to counter the well-entrenched opinion that the writer "did not use his experiences as the source of his work." Kibler's answer is the poetry: "No poems could be any more honest or intensely personal. . . . Clearly art for Simms was not an escape from reality but a way of facing it."

Simms is, in general, a competent versifier by American standards of the time, which is not saying a great deal, since American writers and critics have a very high degree of tolerance for incompetent verse. As is the case with his novels, what first strikes the reader about his poetry is the great range of Simms' work: social and political satire, love poetry, descriptive verse, and some of the most melancholy reflections that saw print in a melancholy age. In "What's Left"—hitherto published only as an anonymous lyric in a newspaper—the cold-hearted poet muses on the death of his wife (he had also lost nine children to say nothing of every worldly possession, including his plantation house with a library of nearly 11,000 books). He thinks of the possibility of another love, another marriage, but concludes:

> Who, with his memories of the past,
> *In midnight hours, a mournful throng,*
> But trembles lest the tempest blast,
> Shall hush the sweetest spells of song!
> Who, with each soft, subsiding strain,
> But feels some memory, stern and sharp,
> Nor hears anew the shriek of pain,
> in all the pauses of the harp!

Simms does not always touch chords so profound in his verse, but as a Horatian satirist he is frequently memorable. Here is a cynical apology for an evening's flirtation:

> The fact is, dear Fanny, I'm human,
> Very weak, I may say, on a spree:
> And no matter of what sort the woman,

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I'm her slave if she cottons to me.
But this cursed sobriety ever
Undoes every chain of delight,
And my memory, by daylight,
has never
Any sense of what takes place
by night.

If I did not know better, I should declare this poem the source of the popular song, "I went to bed at two with a ten and woke up at ten with a two."

The one undoubted masterpiece of satire included by Kibler is Simms' poem "Chilhowee" (in two different versions). Simms answers a friend who had idealized the life of the noble savages in the village before them by painting a squalid picture of Indian life, a drunken spree leading to an ill-advised attack on a squatter's farm and the loss of their property. But in his conclusion, the poet—who in other places wrote far more sympathetically of the Indians he had known—turns the table on the good progressive American democrats:

Five years hence,
And the foul settlement we gaze
on now
will be a village of the paler race,
having its thousand souls.
Churches will rise,
With taverns on each hand. To
the right, see
That gloomy house of morals
called a jail;
And from the town hall, on the
opposite square,
You yet shall hear some
uncomb'd orator
Discourse of freedom, politics,
and law,
In tones shall make your blood
boil, and your hair
Start up in bristles. It may be
your fortune
To hear his comment on your
favorite themes,
"Nature and Freedom"; while
your eyes discern
"Fat Terrapin," "Grey Weasel,"
and perchance,
The aged "Blazing Pine,"—all
Christians then,—
Cowering bewildered, 'mongst
the clamorous crowd
Which hangs delighted on the
orator's words—
Heedful, delightful, drunk as
any there!

Whatever alienation Simms might have felt, he kept to himself, and his poetry is filled with tributes both to Charleston and to the South. On excellent terms with many northern writers, Simms had no use for the north's political leaders. As early as 1850 he had taken their measure:

He proffers love, he prates of ties
That still should bind our fates
in one,
Yet weaves his subtle web of lies,
To share and leave us all undone.

Simms, who was present when Sherman torched Columbia, missed seeing his own house burned to the ground by Yankee troops, but the war was more fatal to his literary career than to his fortunes. Northern publishers reneged on their contracts, and the doors remained closed in the years between the war and his death in 1870; for a hundred years his works have been effectively excluded from the nation's literary canon. The Library of American Literature, with all its faults the most constructive project of the contemporary American publishing business, has brought back into print even Jack London's investigative reporting on the London slums but has so far managed to ignore one of our dominant literary voices of the last century. Guilds, Kibler, James Meriwether, and other Southern literary historians, however, are doing their best to undo the effects of "long years of neglect."

c

LIBERAL ARTS

NO LAUGHING MATTER

Asked by a joking *Spy* magazine what the United States should do to stop what's going on in Freedonia, House freshmen offered such responses as "I just think we need to take action to assist the people" and "It's a different situation than the Middle East." Not one of the approximately 20 first-term congressmen interviewed by *Spy* got the joke: "Freedonia" doesn't exist; it's the fictitious nation from the Marx Brothers' 1933 movie *Duck Soup*.

According to the *New York Times* last January, *Spy*'s staff posed as the host of a New York radio talk show to ask the freshmen questions like "Do you approve of what we're doing to stop what's going on in Freedonia?" and "Do you approve of what we're doing to stop ethnic cleansing in Freedonia?" Apparently thinking the interviewer was referring to events in Bosnia, respondents were generally less candid about their ignorance of the subject than Representative Jay Inslee of Washington, who replied: "I have to be honest with you, I'm not familiar with that proposal. But it's coming to the point now that a blind eye to it for the next ten years is not the answer."

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Every Man a Victim

by Alan J. Levine

"Mankind is tired of liberty."
—Benito Mussolini

A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character
by Charles J. Sykes
New York: St. Martin's Press;
289 pp., $22.95

◆

An acquaintance of mine, who is not particularly conservative, once heard a television newsman quack about how bad the 1950's were. Disgusted, he burst out, "What was wrong with the 1950's? People were *normal* then!"

People certainly seem a lot less "normal" nowadays. Charles J. Sykes has written a worthy successor to his *Profscam* and *The Hollow Men*, which helps explain much of the deterioration in American life over the last 30 years. The charm of his work lies in the way it ties together many of the seemingly quite different signs of social disintegration that are such a marked feature of life in the late 20th century: political correctness; people who believe saying "hi" to a woman over the telephone is "sexist"; the jury that awarded $650,000 in damages to a man who deliberately jumped in front of a subway train; the judge who let Jeffrey Dahmer out on probation for offenses that, even under our crazy laws, should have kept him in jail for 20 years. These phenomena, at first sight, have little to do with each other, although all are familiar instances of the insanity of our age. But what they have in common is this: they are all an expression of *victimology*—the idea that individuals and, even more, groups are victims, and nothing but victims; and that the victim, once defined as such, no longer bears any responsibility for his actions or any obligations to society, which is the author of all evils.

Victimology is a science replete with bizarre contradictions and reversals. As Sykes notes, at some point in the theoretical process, the universal moral standard by which some groups—such as blacks, AmerInds, women—are defined as "victims" is discarded. (Otherwise, it might be necessary to admit that the "victim" has obligations, too.) And by a further transformation, responsibility for the act of victimization is collectivized and made hereditary. While no victim is responsible for his personal behavior, all of his alleged "oppressors" become responsible for crimes the existence of which they do not admit. The ultimate stage is a sort of snowball effect, as more and more groups demand to be perceived as victims and as the process of defining victimhood becomes increasingly imprecise and subjective. The victims are increasingly bogus, and real and bogus victims fall out. The confrontation between Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill, both invoking victimological categories, symbolizes this final stage. And, Sykes notes, victimology is governed by a variety of Gresham's Law: bogus victims tend to drive people with genuine grievances from the public arena, as babblings about "feelings," "sensitivity," and "compassion" replace objective standards of reason and justice.

Anna Myczek-Wodecki

Victimology did not develop overnight. Sykes traces it ultimately to Rousseau, whose romantic treatment of societal victims was critically transformed by the psychologization of morality begun by Freud and by the politicization of psychology, as practiced by Theodore Adorno and the other authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*.

In the past, many people have described their political enemies as mad, sometimes with justification; it was for Adorno and his colleagues to transform their own political views into psychoanalytical diagnoses of their rightist opponents. In purely political terms, *The Authoritarian Personality* was an important milestone in the progressive blurring of the difference between conservatism and fascism and in the identification of middle-class values as the roots of fascism.

The politicization of psychology and the psychologization of politics are deeply intertwined with "medicalization," the creation of a "therapeutic society." Every problem is elevated to a symptom of disease, and the concept of "illness" replaces "evil" or "sin." Moreover, Sykes notes, "it is an essential part of the therapeutic culture to define normal feelings as problems." We are all patients, or at least potential patients. (There are, however, converse developments, which Sykes fails to explore. Under the reign of the pseudo-therapeutic culture, certain types of behavior which were traditionally considered illnesses—

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such as voyeurism and homosexuality—have been reclassified as "normal." Moreover, people who are clearly out of touch with reality and are at best barely able to function have been tossed out of the mental hospitals to fend for themselves.) The result, intended or not, is vast empire-building by real or supposed therapists. A notable example is the spread of the all-purpose concept of "addiction" to cover almost any sort of behavior. As Sykes points out, even honest professionals in the mental health field suffer from a *déformation professionelle*: they are oriented toward finding and treating sickness rather than toward understanding healthy people.

One of the chief elements in the unhinging of American society has been the shift in the civil rights movement and among its supporters to full-blown victimology. This has produced a drastic shift in the definition of racism and an all-out destruction of standards. Once defined as a form of conduct, racism is now transformed into a state of mind, which can be inferred on the basis of little or no evidence. Discrimination, the litmus test of racism, once referred to actual acts or intentions but can now be "demonstrated" by "disparate impact" or apparent results. If relatively few blacks (or members of whatever group of real or alleged "victims") are employed in some occupation or business, that alone suffices to prove discrimination—although such a standard would "prove" discrimination against any, or all, ethnic groups, since no occupation shows a random distribution of people from all backgrounds.

It is perhaps not too astonishing that blacks should grab at such rationalizations to secure their advancement, although it is a bit surprising to see "Justice" Marshall of the Supreme Court baldly justify "reverse" discrimination with the words "Now it's our turn." Such justifications quickly produce claims that any and all standards applied to blacks are illegitimate—a shift Sykes delineates with great skill, and one crucial to the deterioration of American race relations and the level of public debate. As he points out, this shift was largely accomplished within a few years during the 1960's. Most of the deformations of public discourse can already be seen in William Ryan's classic 1971 book *Blaming the Victim*, which details, in hysterical style, how anyone who suggested that there was a culture of poverty, or that the downtrodden might have to change some of their own behavior, was a bigot.

The next step, however paradoxical, was also inevitable, owing to the establishment of the principle that the "victim," once so defined, is beyond criticism. Grotesquely, the stigmata of oppression came to be identified as the chief element of "blackness," the peculiar way of life of the black ghetto, a holy tradition. In many schools, the student who tries to succeed is scorned as "acting white." The curious end result of victimology is actual victimization—of the young, who have never been exposed to higher standards.

There is no clear way out of this situation. Sykes points to the failures of social scientists in predicting the future and in designing useful programs to deal with its problems and emphasizes the need to insist upon good character, good conduct, and self-restraint. Unfortunately, while there are signs that even some professional victimologists and profiteers are themselves viewing the current situation with alarm, their reaction to such events as the Los Angeles riots has been to demand more of the same response, while the cowardice and silliness of many of their nominally "conservative" opponents have offered them little resistance. Unless current signs are deceiving, the full weight of official power is likely to come down on the side of victimology, at least in the foreseeable future. c

The Months

by Roberto Mussapi

In the dark, from the oblivion of the reclining face
she, a silent stranger, led me to sleep,
I saw her head bending down like a slope
of shade as we walked through Genoa, the harbor,
the big waves, and the evening shade slipped into the caves
of my mind, bathed in red light,
the blue stillness of oblivion's lake answered
with muted undertone the memories of sunset,
the sea, the window, battered by spray,
that silent and unknown face
beside me, in the compartment.
So I left the threshold of the living and the lost
where beats the white revealing light,
step between summer and fall, August and September,
between moment being born and moment dying:
sleep, then the oblivious lake,
where love prevails over distance,
where, as still as a glassy lake, a new threshold
goes to the unblemished, the survivors to time,
alive or dead fellows of the trench in the earth,
bright in the stony and crystal-clear eye
wide open in the planet's wounds.
Of that moment, that time, that season
the cradle was the rocking of the train
advancing, rolling in the night,
windy lane of running lights,
wandering city flung westward,
in the darkest dark of tunnels, then under
the frozen course of the stars it all disappeared with
the memory,
I forgot the station and point
and the time marked out by footsteps, and whom

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I had met
and my destination, the west, France.

A few jerks, a junction, switch points,
repercussions on the seat back and on the occiput,
a few calls to the landscape of the waking world,
as if the unexpected loneliness of new space
left me naked and muffled, and armless too,
and instead of names I named syllables,
that stood watch, by the fire,
and covered my shoulders: Francesco,
Beppe, Mas . . . he slid with the rehearsal
of the ancient step, the last S in the channel of sleep,
but I saw them living and unblurred,
armed in the time of daylight, and afterwards I came back
into those waters, ocean drops
with which the moment is imbued,
cradle of painless re-births, new visions,
brother continent in the gilding waters new.
Now I remember July, its glimmer, its blue,
now I remember, as I'm talking in time
I listen to the second-hand and the transistor's crackle,
but that night the beloved month disappeared,
the date of my birth, the name was left,
lost in the threshold months, in the billowing passages:
in sleep, which brings the living and the dead together,
and melts storm and heat, burns the snow in brightness
of summer
burns the snow, and with April rains washes
the streets glittering in the June light.
So it happens, ages
merge in unforgotten moments,
stories and destinies dissolve in movement,
pure rush of power,
flight grazing the soil to our common west.
So, at times, the forgotten man walks in the shade
that approaches,
cut to the bone in her, timeless sister,
so, into the world of the shades merged by darkness,
into its brazier, in the center, into the throbbing
universal breath I slipped, into sleep.

As from the dark of a cave the dim
light, little by little, coheres
before the eyes, and frets and pierces
the black that seemed eternal and unredeemable,
out of pity, perhaps, for glowing
molecules lost in the outskirts of the night,
or because it's attracted by the eyes and the authority
of the mind that pursues light,
so was that dark brightened up with the snow
circling and shedding luster on the night,
and beyond the shaft I saw
the threshold of winter: silence,
stretches of snow, larches.
Valdieri, and Christmas Eve,
the fire, caught in a glimpse, blinking
from the windows, in the frost, and the tree
as tall as me, like me a child.
Soon I shall enter, go through the door, go meet
the people in the celebrating house
with just this shudder brought from the outer world,
the impulse of the blood that in the frost enlivened me.
Footprints toward the path of pines,
little shoes that would lead far away,
Andonno, the great valley,
the black river of the woods and of the poachers.
Everything shone out of the glass, and flame was
the fire in the hearth, the months and the words,
the cigarettes, the wine that flickered
glinting quick in the glasses.

So, as in the dark of a cave the light
crumbles, and as it is born
suddenly lost like the lightning
vanished before you could even say "it's lightning,"
and a sound of water unexpectedly leads you,
the flow of an unknown river
or a thread of stream alongside the wall
and from the damp rock under the feet an enfeebled
fog, despite everything, rises and guides you,
clear and translucent between eyes and mouth in the dark,
so was I physically taken
by a sound of water beyond my own dark,
into the temporal passage of time and into sorrow,
I doubled birth and New Year's Day,
and was in the cold of January, hopeless,
in corso Dante. Horse-chestnuts, snow-hut.
From corso Nizza I saw my mother,
dark, from a distance,
how dark they were the horse-chestnuts and the fir trees,
but on the way she had her arms clutched to her body,
as though she endured the chill to steal it from me.

Each month is a person, a year,
an age, time does not pass over us
atemporal, it urges us, carves
its figures like tattoos without anesthesia,
thus I had a pain in the part of the body
which between skin and flesh drives to occiput and heart.
"For how long, then?"
"Until the texture shatters
and the fibers become unreachable
even to the last look, to memory."

"In this same cruelty of October,
in the shivers of the brook, in this falling
I feel a sort of universal pity
that preceded genesis and justifies it.
Why shouldn't it survive us?"

"What remains of the explored earth,
and of the fields where we have built our history,
if it won't be a man,
one who drinks and bleeds,
the one to whom we'll be handing on the baton?"

Calm, a sea of oil, morning light,
so, like a ligurian awakening among palms
and pines with slow motion brightens the room,
the stillness of that sea came over my eyes,
and many I saw again in thought, lost in the years,
since empty was the desk and the schoolroom closed,
in June, and the black apron became a memory.

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Then July, the age between primary and secondary school,
like the millennia of void and waiting
before the planet's transmutations.
Loria, Ferri, and Dalmasso,
to what streets, what cities in the world
after graduation, the diaspora
that July of growth and leave-taking?

I remember the empty desks in the bright sun,
the schoolroom door shut by the caretaker,
the teacher now with his back turned, in the shadow
of the corridor and then of the porches and then darkness.
Ripples shaped like spangles,
slight stiffening of the water's motion,
crests that look like glass,
vitreous-looking ridges, soon broken,
tightened breeze, the waves unfurl and draw out,
the crests are torn into white foam.
Thus, in the sky, the motions rule us,
and from the stillness to the wind time stretches.
Others I met again later,
in cities populous and never seen,
others in places and hours known.
Now I am within time, I know that some came back
here, where the sun warms the stone,
among the breathing shades of leaves and people.
Others came back in me, in the ciborium
of memory where we grasp and hope,
but in that moment I saw them by me,
contemporary, present, mine.
Then, every wave by the wind crushed
air full of foam, white sea:
and nothing visible between the waters and the sky
nothing that looked like a horizon,
storm, white obscurity, energy
sent forth in the shapeless universe.

There was no echo, the deaf blow was lost,
from within, in silence and darkness:
in that moment I remained alone, in front
of the house I'd been looking for, deserted,
uninhabited except by those who unmoving
feigned death,
denying to me and to themselves the illusion of breath.
Then, in the night that was drawing on at my back
I heard the hand beating the seconds
of the internal clock, immortal time
that left me aside, forsaken by the utmost course—
mathematical—of time. The dark
lost any grain of light or hope, lost its shape
it was a void of light between myself and possible others,
I remembered the name of no one, of nothing.
Then among the leaves at my left I heard
the shade of a plant move, alert,
and caught the beat of my heart, aloud,
in the loneliness of night
and in the frozen charm of all the forces at hand,
dumb presences of the planet, syllables
disembodied for centuries, in that beat
they brought the galaxies and the universe back
to the ancient
breath, I was alone and high up in front of the door,
of the other one, dark night waiting forever.

Then, like a slap, a wind hot
and violent woke me up, tossed the curtain,
rising from the sea toward the shade of the compartment.
Its seat was as empty as the troposphere
on the coasts that scudded by at my right,
when the air arises dragged along by its burning
and the empty sky calls for more to the brackish
and cold waters. Void and dark and desert
was the way back, the passageway
glimmered with feeble tunnel lights
and I did not know what night would wait for me,
what dark, what obscurity, on the way out,
if anything would have remained identical and
without stars
forever till the end of the journey and of the west,
if she was vanished for a while or forever
and I with her, like fire and powder
that at their first kiss consume each other.

The mind, again, goes through the stations again,
the possible
wounds, Arenzano, Varazze, or Celle, maybe,
perhaps she still goes up to the pine-wood
as happened on another birthday,
and maybe the footprints in the sand were hers,
at Augustus's baths, it was she who was going away
slight in the darkness of the underground walkway.
Or maybe she was the one who in Spotorno,
multiplied in the discotheque lights,
seemed to me pure moving image,
a soul electrified by the sound and by its tempo,
or in Noli, suspended on the see-saw of the park.
Not here, now, six miles far from France
at the western boundary and at the end of sense,
before, in the oily water of dream's last moment,
the shining black that came after the storm
in Piazza del Perfetto Amore, between shade and shade,
or in Vico del Ferro, by the walls
crumbled by centuries of stroking hands,
where I got lost between east and west,
where the tall buildings sway like ships
among gargoyles, niches and figure-heads
built on the rolling and powerful earth.
There she had led me, on the deep journey,
there she had gone down from that, burned in a flash.
It's dark. I looked westward, at the great intermittent
lighthouse
which is like the lids of my eyes in the dark,
dumb, mutual swaying back and forth,
harmony crude between shore and soul,
there, where the path started and the dream ended
perhaps she awaits me, for the last journey.
In the planet's shudder and in the flux of time.

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L'Etranger Chez Lui

by J.O. Tate

Pilgrim in the Ruins: A Life of Walker Percy
by Jay Tolson
New York: Simon & Schuster;
544 pp., $27.50

◆

I suppose that after William Faulkner and Eudora Welty and Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy (1916-1990) has been for the last three decades the most widely read of Southern writers. He has been known as a social observer as well as a novelist, and as a philosopher as well as a Roman Catholic. And he has been known particularly by readers of these pages, if only because he was given The Ingersoll Foundation's T. S. Eliot Award in 1988. He has been known, I mean to say, not only because of that award but also and even more because of the reasons for which he received it. Jay Tolson has put the case very well:

> Percy was a thinker and artist at odds with his time, both with the various and local zeitgeists of postwar America and, more generally, with the spirit and intellectual tenor of what might crudely be called modernity. Percy, moreover, was uncomfortable with the dominant ethos of his culture, occasionally even at war with it.

It's all the more remarkable, therefore, that such a shrewd and sympathetic study as Tolson's should emerge of the politically incorrect Percy—who once pointed out on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* that there is no scientific doubt about when life begins: at the moment of conception. Characteristically of Percy, his point was true, simple, precise, and unwelcome though much needed. As with much that he said, he was in a unique position to say it.

Walker Percy was the product of one of the most distinguished of Southern families. He had in his background not only a strong sense of *noblesse oblige* and of the moral imperatives of leadership, but also a predisposition to melancholy and even suicide. And there was too the imposing presence of his "Uncle Will," William Alexander Percy—poet, lawyer, bachelor, adoptive cousin, and author of one of the best books about the South, *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son* (1941). Much of Walker Percy's creative work was a response to and even a loving rejection of the tradition of the Percys, and of Uncle Will's stoicism and aestheticism as well. Percy's conversion was perhaps the most important but not the only way in which he responded to his heritage and transcended it.

Walker Percy's preparation for the career no one could have foreseen consisted not only in his training as a medical doctor but also in his self-imposed study of the Continental tradition of philosophy and fiction—the existential line of Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, and Camus; the tradition of Jaspers, Husserl, Heidegger; the line of logical positivists, Thomists, Gabriel Marcel—you name it, he read it. And he read it as a convalescent, as a man who had felt the brush of death's wing: a father's suicide, World War II, tuberculosis. After his recovery, conversion, and marriage, he still had not found himself and pushed on through false starts toward *The Moviegoer* (1961). This first book won national acclaim, and his path was set, though it was not without travail. Even so, Percy continued with his diagnostic work—his fictional and existential demonstrations that despair is the preparation for revelation. I sometimes think that *The Last Gentleman* (1966) is his best book. *Love in the Ruins* (1971) is lighter and lesser, but also a much needed satire of a nation that had undergone a self-administered lobotomy in the 1960's. *Lancelot* (1977) is a dark and intriguing experiment that was misread when it came out—a strong work, and an exorcism of some personal demons. *The Second Coming* (1980) and *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987) have their incidental felicities, but they are a falling-off from Percy's best days.

Jay Tolson's account of Percy's life is an accessible and admirable chronicle of an off-beat career. Tolson has managed to understand a novelist who was a philosopher, a Christian who was a satirist, a conservative who danced with liberalism, and a moralist who was funny. After all, Southern aristocrats who study German phenomenologists and win the National Book Award their first time at bat don't come down the pike every day. Southern conservatives who convert to Catholicism and are active in the civil rights movement don't either. Jay Tolson has surprised at least one reader with his nimble excursion through a minefield of conflicting ideologies, confusing philosophies, unlikely assumptions, and quirky personalities. His graceful negotiation of decades of turbulence, confusion, and passion is a lucid tour of change and folly, a useful review of modern history, and a pleasure to read.

One of those pleasures comes in thinking of Tolson's life of Percy spatially rather than chronologically. It is a vivid recreation of places: Greenville, Mississippi; Birmingham, Alabama; Chapel Hill; New York City; Saranac Lake; New Orleans; Sewanee, Tennessee; Covington, Louisiana; the Schwarzwald in Germany; the American desert. Another pleasure is discovering the biographies—of William Alexander Percy, of Shelby Foote, of Walker Percy's wife and children and brothers—within the biography. Actually Tolson's book is so good that I started to wonder: there must be some flaw that a critic can pick at. The account of *Gone With the Wind* on page 129 misses that novel's irony altogether—I think it's the only time we catch Tolson napping.

But this reader's reflexes notwithstanding, Walker Percy is the center of attention, and he was a man of ideas. Jay Tolson excels in his exposition of the threads of continuity in Walker Percy's life and in his accounting for the dialectic of life and art as Percy lived it. He has shown Percy in the round and as he related to his family, his community, and the world of ideas in his time. And he has shown him as an individual *engagé*, even a knight of faith, one who maintained his integrity to the end and who sustained the tradition of family honor in a wholly new way.

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Jay Tolson has caught the particular watchfulness of Percy, his reserve, even his pride and accedia, and rendered a convincing portrait of an idiosyncratic, thoughtful, and sometimes indignant gentleman. At the end, Percy's is a noble leave-taking, the capstone of a good life. This compelling biography of an intellectual conveys drama of thought and agony of composition while filling in the impression of flesh and blood. Relaxed, persuasive, nuanced, and balanced, Tolson's life of Percy is a moving and even morally challenging biography of a moralist in an immoral world. What more can we ask of such a book?

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Visible Poets

by R.S. Gwynn

Their Ancient Glittering Eyes: Remembering Poets and More Poets
by Donald Hall
New York: Ticknor & Fields; 348 pp., $22.95

Many readers will fondly recall the earlier incarnation of *Their Ancient Glittering Eyes* (the title is taken from Yeats's *Lapis Lazuli*), published in 1978 as *Remembering Poets*. That book contained Donald Hall's reports of his close encounters with four giants of modernism—Robert Frost, Dylan Thomas, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound. When Hall began revising for a new edition he decided, happily for us, to add his reminiscences of three more poets—Marianne Moore, Archibald MacLeish, and Yvor Winters—plus two interviews with Moore. The result is doubly valuable in that it returns a splendid collection of short memoirs to print and adds Hall's recollections of three other key figures in the history of modern poetry.

Hall has been fortunate in his career in several ways. He decided on his vocation while still in high school, and after his Harvard years, during which he was editor of the *Advocate*, he went to Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize and made the contacts that would aid him in coediting the two editions of *The New Poets of England and America*, one of the most influential collections of its type ever published. Later he returned to Harvard for three years as a junior fellow, then spent a year studying at Stanford before settling in at the University of Michigan as poet-in-residence. Unlike most contemporary tenure-hugging poets, Hall left a successful academic career behind in the mid 1970's to live on a family farm in New Hampshire, and that bold career move gave him the freedom to write on a remarkably wide range of subjects, from poetics to baseball.

Through most of his life, Hall has been blessed with the company of poets of several generations. He attended the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference at 16 and encountered the formidable Robert Frost there. At Harvard, his contemporaries included John Ashberry, Adrienne Rich, and Robert Bly, and he took a writing class from MacLeish. While studying in England, he met T. S. Eliot, whom he had encountered through correspondence as a result of an undergraduate *faux pas* (the *Advocate* had reprinted Eliot's juvenilia without permission); went pub-crawling with Dylan Thomas; and later traveled to Italy to interview Ezra Pound for the *Paris Review*. Back in the States, he studied for a year with Yvor Winters and later interviewed Marianne Moore twice. His book is filled with fascinating glimpses of many other poets: the young John Hollander "sitting on both sides" of Eliot at a Harvard dinner; the anthologist Oscar Williams receiving a chilly greeting from Eliot; Winters worrying whether the British poet Thom Gunn would be able to manage California highways; Theodore Roethke calling Hall in the midst of one of many celebrated episodes of mental illness, offering to do a reading with money that existed only in his manic fantasies. Not surprisingly, Hall manages to tell a good deal of his own story as well; indeed, the stages of his poetic rites of passage often provide the necessary tensions in his relationships with his mentors that make the prose come alive, as when he finds himself reading a satirical poem on "preachy political poets" in the presence of one of his obvious targets, MacLeish, who during the performance stared "at the floor with his mouth a straight line. 'An interesting social document,' he said."

Readers too young to remember the members of this remarkable generation when they were alive may find it difficult to believe that poets could have been such visible cultural figures. But Frost, who relished playing his role, what Randall Jarrell once called "the Only Genuine Robert Frost in Captivity," was almost constantly on the public stage for the last 30 years of his life, ending his career with an appearance at a presidential inauguration and a visit with Khrushchev in the U. S. S. R. Eliot, as a Nobel laureate and author of *The Waste Land*, was a chief arbiter of literary taste both here and in his adopted England. Pound and Thomas were best known for their notoriety—Pound for his pro-Mussolini broadcasts from Rome and postwar incarceration in a mental hospital; Thomas for his outrageous, self-destructive behavior on American reading tours that led to his premature death. MacLeish, who has recently been the subject of a full-length biography, combined a successful literary career with important posts in business and government. Even the eccentric Moore, the least likely of the group to court the crowd, became something of a media celebrity in the last decade of her life, unsuccessfully lending her talents to Ford Motor Company to name a new automobile (it turned out to be the Edsel!) and appearing on the *Today Show* to discuss baseball with Joe Garagiola. Of the seven, only Winters was a full-time academic who never appeared in the public arena, but even he carried the aura of secure reputation about him. Hall's account of their first meeting reveals the man's essence, which Hall terms "pugnacious and nuts": "'You come from Harvard,' said Winters . . . , 'where they think I'm lower than the carpet.' A moment later he added, 'Do you realize that you will be ridiculed, the rest of your life, for having studied a year with me?'" One of the most memorable moments in the book is when Hall, afraid of becoming yet another slavish disciple of the strong-willed Winters, decides to bail out of Stanford: "We attended a party at Winters's house late in spring. In a crush of students and faculty, Winters asked a small favor: Would I fill the ice bucket from the bag in the kitchen? Asking the favor, he addressed me as 'son.' When I heard the monosyllable, I went weak in the knees. *Geronimo*!"

Despite the appearance of several full-

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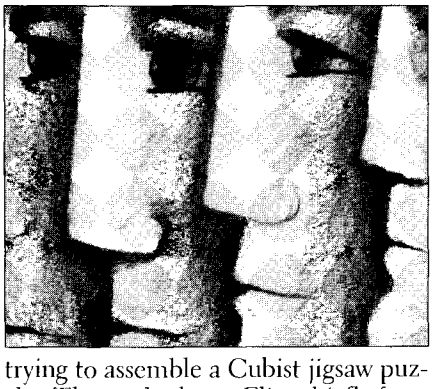
length biographies since *Remembering Poets* was first published, Hall's memories add some lively brush strokes to the official portraits, for he is a master of the telling anecdote that reveals character. Frost, if not quite the egotistical monster of Lawrence Thompson's biography, remains a complex, overly sensitive man whose sometimes vicious competitive streak was at odds with his carefully maintained public image. Still, he could let the mask down. Hall's final meeting with him was during the last summer of Frost's life, when he and his wife and children visited the poet in Vermont. As he pulled off, he looked in the rearview mirror and spied the 88-year-old poet jogging after the car, wanting to remind Hall not to mention one of his remarks in order to spare the feelings of another young poet. Pound, already wrestling with the silence that closed around him in his last years, seems almost desperate to set the record straight. I recall reading Hall's *Paris Review* interview almost 25 years ago, thinking then that this poet who could recall Yeats and the young Eliot so painstakingly was far from mad; however, Hall's memoir indicates, if not insanity, at least severe depression and occasional megalomania, and his account of how he edited the interview into coherence is like an account of someone



trying to assemble a Cubist jigsaw puzzle. Those who know Eliot chiefly from his desiccated early poetry will be happily surprised to encounter him in his last decade, when the success of his stage plays and a fortunate second marriage had changed his appearance radically: "When I first talked with him at Faber he had been an old sixty-three, pale and stooped with a hacking cough. Now, at seventy—but with a new young wife—he looked like George Sanders; now he looked debonair, sophisticated, lean, and handsome, with a deep tan just acquired in the Caribbean."

Marianne Moore is the sole woman here, and she usually occupies a similarly lonely shelf in the hierarchy of the modernist canon. Hall says that he omitted the section on her from *Remembering Poets* because he felt that his "recollections added nothing to common knowledge." After reading Charles Molesworth's generally unsatisfying 1990 biography of Moore, one is still likely to want to get at the mystery, if indeed there is a mystery, behind her militant spinsterhood and the writing that she begrudgingly called poetry "because there is no other category in which to put it." Hall says, "Of all the poets I recollect here, Marianne Moore is the one who remains the most mysterious, and—not incidentally?—looms larger in her poems every time I read her." Hall never quite arrives at a solution to the puzzle, but he makes it plain that Moore's eccentric poetry and life were all of a piece. At an interview with Hall, during which she kept her hand over her mouth to cover the absence of a broken denture, she served him an idiosyncratic lunch that seemed to come straight out of one of her poetic catalogs:

> My tray held several little paper cups, the pleated kind used for cupcakes, which she employed as receptacles. In one there were several raisins, perhaps seven, and in another a clutch of Spanish peanuts. There was a cheese glass (from Kraft processed spread) half full of tomato juice. There was a glass dish that contained one quarter of a canned peach. There were three saltines and a tinfoil-wrapped wedge of processed Swiss cheese. There was something sweet, cake-like, and stale. . . . In a moment, she left the room and returned with something to fill me up, but which she could not herself chew. From the package she poured on my tray a mound of Fritos. "I like Fritos," she croaked, covering her mouth. "They're so nutritious."

Readers of these poets will find the nutritional benefits of Mr. Hall's prose more than adequate, I suspect.

R.S. Gwynn is editor of the Dictionary of Literary Biography *volume* American Poets Since 1945. *He is a professor of English at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.*

A Piece of the Action

by George Garrett

The Critics Bear It Away: American Fiction and the Academy
by Frederick Crews
New York: Random House;
215 pages, $20.00

◆

The Critics Bear It Away is a collection of eight essays by Frederick Crews, dating "from the later 1980's and early 1990's," starting off, after the accurate road map of the "Introduction," with "*The Sins of the Fathers* Revisited," an afterword written to accompany the 1989 reprinting of *The Sins of the Fathers* (1966), which Crews describes as "the most influential of my critical studies," one that seems to have "helped to establish a vogue for Freudian criticism not just of Hawthorne but of American writers generally." More than 20 years of active critical engagement since then have allowed Crews the chance to change his mind about some things, to modify some earlier judgments, and, at the very least, to admit to the need for a much more expanded and complicated context than strictly "the intrapsychic realm" of Freudian psychoanalysis. Moreover he recognizes, in a personal, at times confessional, stance and tone that he himself has now become part of the picture, someone with his very own piece of the action: "My drastically changed relation to *Sins* and to psychoanalysis has itself, I realize, become a topic of academic notice, provoking responses ranging from puzzlement to titillation to dismay." The other essays, versions of most of which appeared in Crews' familiar public showcase, the *New York Review of Books*, are mostly extended book reviews and are arranged in a more or less chronological sequence of critical concerns, moving from a fairly general statement of point of view ("Whose American Renaissance?") to a more specific focus. The final essay is a close reading (and demonstration of method) of John Updike's novel *Roger's Version* (1986). In between there are two pieces on Mark Twain and one each about Hemingway, Faulkner, and Flannery O'Connor.

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As anyone familiar with any of Crews' other work (including the lucrative *Random House Handbook*, which is at once gloriously funny and extremely useful and practical) knows, all of it is highly intelligent, wonderfully sane, often very witty, frequently subtle, and sometimes right on the memorable and aphoristic money: "Throughout most of the previous decade, sexual and religious aspiration had been a single blur for Updike. But nobody's adolescence can last forever."

Mainly, as the title promises, this book is a critique of contemporary academic critics of various kinds, their acts and ways being set against the background of attack and counterattack on the brutal battlefields of "our currently polarized academy." Crews presents himself as something of a moderate, standing between those he calls the New Americanists (defined by "connection to our historic national shames—slavery, 'Indian removal,' aggressive expansion, imperialism, and so forth—and to current struggles for equal social opportunity") and those he names as "cultural nostalgics," who are "people who conceive of the ideal university as a pantheon for the presentation of great works and great ideas." Moderate as he may be, especially when compared to space-age savages like Jane Tompkins, Frank Lentricchia, and Sacvan Bercovitch, Crews clearly leans more toward the cult of the politically correct than that of the "conservative Jeremiahs"; and he shares any number of common attitudes popularly held among prominent New Americanists, simply taking for granted, for example, that it is accurate to define the historic Deep South as an "old blend of vileness and aristocratic pretense." Not surprisingly he finds *Tom Sawyer* to be demonstrably "haunted by violence, fear, guilt, sadism, and suggestions of universal egotism and cowardice." Of Hemingway he argues: "What Hemingway needs is an ideal reader who can discard everything that is meretricious in our image of him but then do justice to the literary art that remains." And, a little farther along, he adds: "To arrive at that vulnerable and exacting artist, we must first learn to forgo the Hemingway legend." Hemingway is seen as lying, "bloodthirsty," and impotent—"Hemingway evidently fancied an unclimactic fondling that evoked infantile passivity and gender confusion." Even worse, there seems to be something to the suspicion that he was sometimes anti-Semitic and homophobic. Or, anyway, some of his central characters, whom Crews assumes, when he pleases, to be mouthpieces for the author, are so discovered to be depicted. Similarly we have to come to terms with "the egregiousness of Faulkner's sexism and racism."

Crews' best essay may be his title piece on Flannery O'Connor, if only for his persuasive account of O'Connor as a child of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and the New Criticism. "A cynic might say, then," he writes, "that in lionizing O'Connor the American university has not so much acknowledged a literary genius as bestowed a posthumous laurel on its most diligent student." And Crews cannot be faulted for pointing out that her great achievement comes chiefly through "the perfecting of a single hard-edged mode." But someone who can casually write, as he does in an earlier essay, about "the most politically conservative concept of sin," someone who views the "explicitly Christian expansion of sympathy" in "The Artificial Nigger" as "a regressive political act," cannot be taken as a completely just authority in his appraisals of either Catholic (O'Connor) or Protestant (Updike) faith. Crews seems to have minimal sympathy for or understanding of Christianity except as a matter of intellectual history, a diminishing part of the embattled canon.

But there is much about *The Critics Bear It Away* that may be valuable, and not merely Crews' insights (and there are plenty), nor, indeed, the genuine pleasures of his writing in general and detail, nor, for that matter, his serious arguments for sensible moderation, a quality surely and sorely needed in English departments everywhere. One considerable service is that he freely quotes and paraphrases the arguments and outrageous statements of some of the leading figures among the New Americanists, thus leading the reader directly to the happy conclusion that we need not waste any more precious time and energy reading any more of their efforts. We may consider Crews an advocate and mediator in this matter (not our *only* one, but at least a worthy witness); and we can return to the original texts, Twain and Hemingway and Faulkner and O'Connor and Updike and all the others in the sure and certain hope that we need no New American-ist critic to guide us to our own destination.

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Gerald Who?

by Bill Kauffman

Memories of the Ford Administration
by John Updike
New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 369 pp., $23.00

◆

Snaking out from the Middle Atlantic states is a long distinguished line of political and literary Copperheads: Millard Fillmore, Horatio Seymour, Harold Frederic, Edmund Wilson, and the Pennsylvania duo of James Buchanan and John Updike. These men were certainly not proslavery, but they did view the Union cause with rather more skepticism than did their New England brethren. As with Southerners, they remember their dead: the anti-Lincoln New York Governor Seymour was memorialized years later by novelist Frederic, who in turn was rediscovered by his choleric fellow North Country patriot Wilson. Likewise, Shillington, Pennsylvania's Updike dedicated a play,"Buchanan Dying" (1974), to the Keystone State's only President, the oft-derided failure "in the trembling shadow of the Civil War." With *Memories of the Ford Administration*, John Updike takes another crack at this doughface whose sole claim to fame—his bachelorhood—has of late won him the tag (from, among others, *Penthouse*) of "America's first gay President."

The novel's queer title comes from its character Alf Landon Clayton, a history instructor at the all-girl, too-cute-by-half Wayward Junior College in a dreary New Hampshire industrial town. Alf is asked to provide "memories and impressions" of Gerald R. Ford's presidency for a scholarly journal; what he writes, instead, is a retrospective of his

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collapsing marriage and bed-hopping during the years 1974 to 1977.

You've read all this before: bored faculty wives awash in gin, pert coeds, available menopause babes, etc. It is the exiguous grist of campus Creative Writer Mills, impossible to read but not, alas, to write. Talk about chewing more than you've bitten off; if any American thirsts for one more peek at the couplings of unattractive campus un-deads in their graves of academe, come and get it. But there is more. Side by side with Alf's boring lecheries are fragments of his "historical/psychological, lyrical/elegiacal," as well as highly speculative, biography of his magnificent obsession, President James Buchanan.

Buchanan is the most unlovable doughface. Douglas at least had Lincoln, and Pierce his dead son and his drinking problem, but poor Old Buck seldom gets credit for anything more than "shrewd inertia." To Alf, however, "he projected a certain vaporous largeness, the largeness of ambivalence. . . . [Regarding] Buchanan's mind, people complained he couldn't make it up, and I liked that."

The key to Alf's Buchanan lies in his courtship of Anne Coleman, the fickle daughter of a Lancaster iron magnate. Jimmy Buchanan is a young lawyer, a Federalist, and somewhat of an *arriviste*, and like so many of our eminent forefathers he wants to marry well. Anne, his betrothed, is a volatile pettish princess; she calls off the engagement after a silly misunderstanding fueled by a local doxy. Or so goes the story Alf concocts from the scraps and gobbets of gossip that survive over the years. Sent to Philadelphia for some R&R, the distraught Anne dies—a suicidal overdose of laudanum, goes the whispering—and Buchanan is cursed ever after. "He was scared of the world, Buchanan was. He thought it was out to get him, and it was."

The interdeterminacy of history bedevils Alf. Did Anne really dismiss Jimmy because of an unstable tart's loose lips? Did Anne take her own life? How can we possibly know the welter of secret motivations and hidden jealousies that animate the wooden stiffs in the history books? And it's all so random. In one of the novel's many delightful passages, Alf imagines swain Jimmy pursuing Anne to Philadelphia, winning her back, and settling into the blissful domesticity of Lancaster, while President Stephen Douglas craftily and bloodlessly reconciles North and South.

Young Buchanan, more than Old Buck the President, is Alf's quarry. He broods upon "the curious long wrestle between God and Buchanan, who, burned early in life by a flare of violence, devoted his whole cunning and assiduous career thereafter to avoiding further heat, and yet was burned at the end, as the Union exploded under him. The gods are bigger than we are, was to be the moral. They kill us for their sport."

Scattered throughout the novel are refreshing revisions that give the Buchanan material the character of an amiable, digressive, iconoclastic essay: "He tried to keep peace. That whole decade of Presidents did, Fillmore and Pierce and Buchanan—try, I mean—and they *succeeded*, they *did* keep the South placated, and in the Union, which was important, since if war had come in 1850 instead of 1860, the outcome might have been very different; the South had all its assets in place—the military tradition, the great officers, the down-home patriotism, King Cotton—and the North still needed to grow. And precious little thanks they've got from history for it—the doughface Presidents. History loves blood. It loves the great blood-spillers. Poor Buchanan was ahead of his time, trying to bring mankind up a notch, out of the blood."

Much of Alf's biography of Buchanan affects the euphuistic language of the period's popular prose; there are no leaves in the Lancaster fall, but there is plenty of "arborial foliage." And if it's Updike, there must be sex, although the fornication scenes are detumescent as ever—"as tiresome as an old mortgage," as the novelist Henry W. Clune complains.

Despite the parallels in the lives of Alf Clayton and James Buchanan, the dual narratives are neatly divided. The reader who can overcome his compunctious reluctance to skip pages—dozens of them—will be rewarded with a charming and playful novelette about a little-known President who, for all his difficult dithering, killed 600,000 fewer Americans than did his successor.

Bill Kauffman of Genesee County, New York, is author of the novel Every Man A King *(Soho Press).*

Truth in Self-Advertisement

by Gregory McNamee

Fear and Loathing: The Strange and Terrible Saga of Hunter S. Thompson
by Paul Perry
New York: Thunder's Mouth Press; 288 pp., $22.95

◆

Hunter S. Thompson does not suffer fools gladly. For that matter, he seems to suffer no one at all, gladly or not. A survivor of the 1960's, he has deemed his contemporaries "a whole subculture of frightened illiterates" and those younger than they "a generation of swine." (And these are the people he professes to like; never mind those he despises, such as George Bush and Charles Keating.) Still, he has carved out a niche for himself as the most beatifically foolish journalist working in America today, a practitioner of inspired lunacy in the name of truth-seeking inquiry. No believer in so-called reportorial objectivity, he has become far better known than most of his subjects. How many people remember Thomas Eagleton (a sideshow character in Thompson's savage book of 1972, *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail*) these days?

The Acid Era has left its scars on the man. For one thing, he is now incapable of speaking a coherent, un-whiskey-slurred sentence, an odd condition for a man who makes much of his living on the college lecture circuit. (The kiddies want only to see this legendary man, we must suppose, not to hear what he has to say.) For another, he has never recovered from the paranoia of the Nixon years, and his reclusiveness is legendary. For that reason, Paul Perry warns us early on, his life of Thompson "is a violently unauthorized biography."

Perry himself is no detached observer. As editor of *Running* magazine in the early 1980's, he commissioned Thompson to attend an Ironman Competition (a grueling athletic contest comprised of swimming, bicycling, and running) in Hawaii. Thompson, fueled by all sorts of chemical compounds and incentive-reducing beverages, never delivered the manuscript Perry expected, but the all-

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expenses-paid trip later yielded Thompson's disappointing book *The Curse of Lono*. Perry's hours spent trying to coax a printable text from Thompson had results, too: they gave him an up-close look at the writer, as well as a means of discovering—burst by incoherent burst—a few details about the man behind the druggy mask, the man who refused to cooperate with Perry while providing abundant material.

Born to genteel poverty into an old Louisville family, Thompson was a young golden boy, popular in school for his athletic prowess, good looks, quick wit, and gift with a pen. As a teenager, however, the now fatherless Thompson took to drinking and hell-raising; he failed to graduate from high school and, as an enlistee in the Air Force, managed to rack up nearly every punishment duty short of time in Leavenworth for myriad acts of rebellion. (His unit commander called him "totally unclassifiable . . . one of the most savage and unnatural airmen I've ever come up against.") Dismissed from the service in 1957, Thompson wandered into New York, promptly found a series of plum journalistic jobs and just as promptly was fired from them, married and divorced and married again, and then took up the life of a beatnik in Puerto Rico and, later, at Big Sur.

Only after a few years of poverty—the real thing this time—did Thompson give up the bongos-and-Chianti life and find meaningful work. He made his way to Latin America and began to submit pieces on speculation to the newly founded *National Observer*, a newspaper of opinion. The editors liked what they saw, especially a story that Thompson filed from Caracas, Venezuela, in which he described a British diplomat who practiced his golf game on his penthouse terrace, driving golf balls far out into the city below; "Where they fell," Thompson wrote, "neither he nor I nor anyone else on the terrace that day had the vaguest idea."

Still, Perry reminds us, straight journalism and Thompson never quite seemed to coincide. When in need of a colorful anecdote to enliven a story, Thompson would cheerfully invent one and never mind the consequences, whether a libel suit or a bullet. His unlikely tales of ever-uglier Americans south of the equator finally came under editorial scrutiny, and Thompson was invited to contribute his work elsewhere. Finding a new home at *Scanlan's* magazine, Thompson relocated to San Francisco, where he found the subject that would make his reputation: the nation's most vicious motorcycle gang, his study of which led to his first book, *Hell's Angels*. He also discovered, in those heady days of 1964, other matters that would carry his reputation even farther: chemicals with names like LSD, STP, and DMT.

The effects of those drugs upon a mind already given to inventing tales and presenting them as fact soon led to the formulation of Thompson's now-famous style. The origins of the term "Gonzo Journalism" are shrouded in time—Perry traces it to an editor at the *Boston Globe*—but you will now find it in Webster's third: "bizarre, unrestrained, specifically designating a style of journalism so characterized." Whether it can fairly be called journalism at all is an issue Perry chooses not to address; if I were a bookseller or a librarian, I would shelve Thompson's work in the fiction stacks. Certainly his purportedly fly-on-the-wall encounters with J. Edgar Hoover, Richard Nixon, and more recently Clarence Thomas, published as straight fact in *Rolling Stone* magazine (for which Thompson is "sports editor"), qualify as some of the funniest lies since Mark Twain's. And a good lie, as we all know, can convey a world of truth.

After drawing on interviews with more than a hundred friends and confidants of Thompson's, Perry devotes a bit too much of his book to considering Thompson's published work. Anyone who has read Thompson—an acquaintance I highly recommend, with a grain-of-salt caveat—will find Perry's reading a bit pedestrian; thankfully, he steers clear of lit-crit while offering his *précis* of Thompson's seven books and countless articles. Still, *Fear and Loathing* is strong enough work to transcend this mode st shortcoming.

Res ipsa loquitur, Thompson is fond of saying. The thing speaks for itself. Paul Perry's useful—and enormously entertaining—book surely does. This candid biography may reduce the admiration many people feel for the man, whose fame derives from some, if not all, of the wrong reasons. *Fear and Loathing* gives us a tantalizing look into the mind of our foremost chronicler of the death of the American Dream. Read it and weep.

Gregory McNamee is the editor of Named in Stone and Sky, *a literary anthology recently published by the University of Arizona Press.*

LIBERAL ARTS

DYNA-MIGHTY

Amid much pomp and celebration, the ruthless leader of one of the Midwest's largest and most violent street gangs was released from prison last winter after serving only half of his seven-year sentence for two weapons convictions. As the *Chicago Tribune* reported, five limousines and over a dozen young men and women dressed in leather, fur, gold, diamonds, and alligator shoes came to Logan Correctional Center, 30 miles north of Springfield, Illinois, last December 30 to retrieve 42-year-old Willie Lloyd, self-proclaimed national boss of the Chicago-based Vice Lords.

Dressed in black and white leather and sporting a mink coat, which his "deputies" had delivered to the prison, Lloyd stepped outside Logan's steel doors, raised his right hand at his followers, and shouted, "Mighty! Mighty!" Lloyd's top deputies immediately crowned him with a black skull cap trimmed in gold like the ones they wore, and Lloyd exchanged passionate kisses with his fiancée Renee, who was wearing a matching mink and a hot-pink miniskirt.

Jailed on two counts of unlawful use of a weapon by a felon, Lloyd had previously been convicted of killing an Iowa police officer in the 1970's; while he had not been convicted of a serious crime in Chicago before the two weapons charges, he has been arrested at least 19 times since 1968.

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Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Capture the Flag, Part II

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We have it on good authority that the peacemakers are blessed, and that's only fair, because we sure catch hell in this world. Not long ago I suggested that most Southerners who display the Confederate flag are not bigots and got some hate mail to the effect that only a bigot could believe that. Last month I observed that there's something to be said for state symbols less divisive than that one and concluded that if I were a Georgian I'd probably favor taking the Southern Cross off the state flag. Now I find myself being chastised by folks who apparently believe that *this* is not a matter on which decent people can disagree. Political correctness comes in a variety of flavors, doesn't it—or maybe I just wasn't clear. Let me try again.

We're going to be hearing a lot more about this flag business. So far the Georgia flap has received the most attention, partly because of the Olympic tie-in, partly (I suspect) because most of the national press has regional bureaus in Atlanta. But you may also have heard that next door in Alabama the flag's opponents recently went to court to get an order forbidding the state to fly it over the capital where Jefferson Davis took his oath of office. As it happens, I'm writing this month from Mississippi, where yesterday Aaron Henry told an audience at Mississippi College that if Martin Luther King were alive today changing the state flag would be one of his top three priorities. (I forget the other two.) Obviously the winds of change are starting to blow.

Incidentally, Mississippi put the Southern Cross on its state flag in 1894, long before Georgia, not hesitating to resort to the kind of subterfuge that would later give literacy tests a bad name. Here's a part of the description: "It [the state flag] incorporates the national colors and has 13 stars of the original colonies. It has a union square with a ground of red and a broad blue saltier thereon, broadened with white and emblazoned with stars." Just coincidence, we are to suppose, that the result happens to be the Confederate battle flag.

Anyway, Ernest Renan once observed that the existence of a nation requires that some things be forgotten, and he was obviously right about that, as we're seeing in the breakup of alleged nations around the world today. But the Southern nation somehow has to surmount two facts: that Southerners won't forget any time soon what the Confederate flag means to them and that unfortunately it means different things to different Southerners. As I say, the South must surmount these facts—that is, if it's to have a future as well as a past.

In earlier letters I've mentioned some studies of what the flag means. All show that to most Southern whites it means one of two things. For some, like my correspondents, it conjures up a variety of worthy Memorial Day sentiments, having to do with tradition, duty, honor, valor, sacrifice, and so forth. For a growing number of others, less historically minded, the flag's specifically Confederate associations are muted. For them it connotes simply a hell-raising, good-timing, outlaw kind of Southern pride. The songs of Hank Williams Jr., for instance, often "brag on that rebel flag," and his fans wave it at his concerts, but he doesn't mean any harm by it and they don't either. (It's a white Southern thing. You wouldn't understand.) If you expect either group—the filiopietistic or the boogie-till-you-puke—to renounce or abandon its orientation, you've got a long wait coming.

But neither of these views is shared or even understood by most non-Southerners or, more importantly, by most Southern blacks. The same studies show that most black Southerners (and a small minority of white ones) see the flag as a sign of the Ku Klux Klan or, more generally, of resistance to the civil rights movement. And, of course, they're not always wrong about that.

Last year I paid a visit to the new civil rights museum in Memphis. Located in the old Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King was shot, this has to be the world's *wordiest* museum—wall after wall of text to read. I was skimming my way through the place when I came across a quotation from James Jackson Kilpatrick, back when he was still a Richmond newspaperman and no friend of desegregation. Kilpatrick wrote then that he was taken aback by the sight of a flag once carried into battle by brave and honorable men, waved by a hateful rabble who turned out to bully black schoolchildren. It gives one pause, he wrote. It still should.

That association is not merely a leftover from the 1950's and 1960's, either. There's no mistaking the meaning of the rather grim householder in my hometown who flies the battle flag once a year—on Martin Luther King's birthday. When the Klan sent a few dozen outside agitators to march down Chapel Hill's main street a few years ago, they carried that flag. And ads for biker regalia in *Easy Riders* magazine sometimes offer the choice of the swastika or . . . that flag.

The jackals who deploy the flag this way are in a perverse collaboration with the flag's opponents to make the symbols of the Confederacy stand for white supremacy and nothing else. Those who want to defend the flag might give some thought to defending it against *them*. Last spring I read a news item from Montgomery reporting that a racist skinhead group had announced its intention to decorate Confederate graves. The usual crowd of antiracist groups turned out to protest the skinheads' very existence, but my question was: where were the Sons of Confederate Veterans? I wish that they, too, had turned out—to protest this desecration.

We need more stories like that, and like a recent one from Roanoke reporting that the S.C.V. there joined with the city's black mayor and its oldest black Presbyterian church to celebrate the anniversary of a stained-glass window honoring Stonewall Jackson. The window was installed by an early minister whose parents had attended a Sunday School for slaves, established by Jackson when he was a professor at VMI. *That* is the kind of story that shakes up preconceptions, that suggests history's not as simple as the textbooks paint it.

I hope it's not too late to redeem the

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Old Flag, but it will certainly take a mighty effort, which has to start with some recognition of what the flag now means to many of our fellow citizens. Meanwhile, attempts to universalize the Confederacy's symbols (by including them in state flags, for instance) imply either that those symbols are black folks', too, or that black folks don't count.

Given that, shouldn't the flag's partisans—those of good will—say something to their opponents like this:

> First, we don't accept your interpretation of what the flag means, and if we feel like it, we'll fly it, put it on our cars, tattoo it on our foreheads, whatever we damn well please—meaning by it what we mean by it, not what you think we mean. Second, we understand that it does mean something different to you. Third, we also recognize that there's no more chance that you'll buy our interpretation than that we'll buy yours. Fourth, symbols of the South (a fortiori, a state flag) should enlist the loyalty and affection of as many Southerners (citizens of the state) as practicable. Fifth, we're therefore willing to look for symbols of the South (a state flag) we can all be attached to.

This strikes me as a coherent and reasonable position, and I'd be very curious to know which part of it my critics don't accept.

* * *

Of course, that just gets us to the hard part. What kinds of symbols fill that bill? If you simply *make up* something, you're likely to wind up with synthetic pseudo-tradition, like Kwanzaa, or, if you're really inept, the Atlanta Olympics' Whatizit, a semiotic black hole that not only has no meaning itself but drains the meaning from everything in its vicinity. When *Southern* magazine went looking for regional symbols a few years ago, it ran into this problem. Its suggestions were so sterile, so unevocative, that I can't even remember what they were.

With time, though, constructed symbols take on meaning (OK, maybe Whatizit's an exception). Every flag was new once: no one had died for it. You have to start somewhere. What could be a suitable emblem of Southern unity?

Personally, I'm partial to one of those flying pigs you see on barbecue signs. No, seriously: a good barbecue joint may be the one place you'll find Southerners of all descriptions—yuppies, hippies, and cowboys, Christians and sinners, black and white together. Not dignified enough for you? Well, lack of *that* concern is a regional tradition, too. Remember how "Dixie" goes on about "buckwheat cakes and Injun batter" that "makes you fat and a little fatter"? Elvis could get with that. Oprah, too. And Delta Burke. Maynard Jackson. Bill Clinton.

But if a winged pig just won't do as a symbol for the new, aerobic South—Dixie Lite—I've got two examples of something a little more cerebral. The first comes from the strange case of the Southern Students Organizing Committee, a group that 60's trivia buffs may recall as a sort of regional affiliate of SDS. Its members delighted in mixed messages: their newsletter was called "The Rebel Yell," and their logo was two clasped hands, black and white, superimposed on the battle flag. As I heard it, their Weatherman comrades from the Northeast and the West Coast found all this about as amusing as the Klan must have, just couldn't handle it, and drummed SSOC out of the movement. I'll forgive them a lot for that.

Just so, last year I was startled, then amused, then heartened to see the battle flag flying from a student residence at the College of Charleston—right next to the green, red, and black banner of black nationalism. I have no idea who flew those flags together, or why, but that sort of juxtaposition can make people stop and think, and I'm optimistic enough to believe that's usually not a bad thing.

These examples make me wonder whether there's some way to universalize the Confederate symbols after all, some way collectively to accept the past for what it was, not deny or forget it, but transform it for our common use. Some other people have been thinking along these same lines lately, and maybe—just maybe—they're getting somewhere. Consider, for instance, the T-shirt designed by *Southern Reader*, a quirky, neo-secessionist, "eco-regionalist" bimonthly out of Oxford, Mississippi. It bears a battle flag, transformed: black and white on a field of green. And a motto from James Brown: "Keep It Funky." I don't know about you, but I think it would be delightful if a few thousand spectators turned up at the Atlanta Olympics in those shirts. If nothing else, it would drive the network guys crazy.

John Shelton Reed writes this month from Jackson, Mississippi, which he is visiting as the Eudora Welty Professor of Southern Studies at Millsaps College.

Letter From Florida

by James J. Novak

On Memorial Day

◆

Though my wife and I make our part-time home in Florida, in the port town of Fort Pierce, for the past six years we have made it a custom to attend Memorial Day services at Vero Beach a few miles up Route A1A. How this custom began we cannot recall; but each year, rain or shine (and in Florida it is usually the latter), we drive up to the park where veterans are memorialized.

Memorial Park is really a small island that sits out a bit from shore in the Intracoastal Waterway or Indian River, which flows between the mainland and the beach. The Intracoastal itself is a sort of memorial to war, for one of its purposes has been to provide a safe channel away from the dangers of submarines. In times of war, much freight can move in the waterway, from Canada to Key West, without ever going out to open sea. In any case, over a small footbridge that traverses the waterway is the park where the services are held.

On the island is a small set of benches set in amphitheater style. On Memorial Day, these are covered by an awning to keep out the glare of the morning sun. A flagpole is placed before the benches, and nearby is a ship's bell. To the left of the island is a pathway, where soldiers from the county who died in Vietnam or any subsequent battle are honored by headstones every ten feet or so, each under a tree, mostly oleanders whose pink or white blossoms help obscure the sun. The island is about 500 yards square; its only purpose is to memorialize local American soldiers.

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When we arrived, the high school band was still rehearsing and color guards from the American Legion and VFW posts, the Marine Corps League, the Navy League, the retired officers' associations, the Disabled Veterans, and the Amvets had gathered in a semicircle around the flagpole, under the blazing sun. Various dignitaries chatted under a smaller marquee, waiting for the ceremony to begin, and red-coated Marine Corps League veterans hustled about, as they were the hosts. Meanwhile, microphones were tested, the band keyed in, and the radio station set up its truck.

At last the ceremony started, with the raising of the flag and that bugle call to the colors that every trained military person has heard morning after morning shortly after reveille. All the veterans stood. Most were grey-haired, their right hand held at attention, saluting that flag once again. Then the halyard raised the flag to the top of the pole, and the band intoned the national anthem, the real one that so many liberals want to replace with "America the Beautiful." Standing tall and proud, the veterans held their salutes until the very last words. As the last strains echoed over the water, the color guards, commanded by a single voice, were directed to order arms, while all in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

Thence began the commemoration, as the local VFW chaplain offered a prayer. Next, Vero's mayor, a retired officer, presented a profound reminder that soldiers have two sets of R&R: rest and relaxation, and, on days like today, remembrance and reflection. He spoke only five minutes, had the right tone, and finished eloquently. There followed another prayer. Last, a retired Marine colonel who, aside from warning us about the dangers ahead (the weapons still available to the Commonwealth of Independent States and, the "in" thing at defense seminars, the so-called Islamic bloc), noted that Memorial Day wasn't always a time for huge sales at shopping malls and just another work day for many. He recalled a time when Memorial Day was more solemn, when stores and businesses closed, and when people soberly visited cemeteries to decorate tombs, to put American Legion flags on veterans' graves and flowers on those of others.

Next, four World War I veterans were presented, thin old men in their 90's, just four of them left in this retirement community. It reminded me of 1991 when my father, on what was to be his last Memorial Day, recalled as a boy seeing a few old Civil War veterans in his Pennsylvania hometown. And now here I was, gazing at the Great War veterans surrounded by greying World War II vets. I thought of my uncle, a newly commissioned ensign in 1941, who passed away last year. His generation, I thought, now was slipping from the stage.

In light of this, seeing the vets of World War I made me happy. They had survived a long time. Hopefully we could expect the World War II vets to survive for awhile as well—at least for another 24 years, the period between the two conflicts. Seeing these slight, bent old men, who remember a major war that most of us only vaguely know had something to do with Sarajevo, produced a sense of bonding between the past and the present that united me with the era of George Washington and the Minute Men. For these old vets had seen Spanish-American War and Civil War vets who, in turn, had seen Mexican War, Indian War, and War of 1812 vets, who in turn had seen. . .

Speeches done, the ceremony once again turned serious. The real ritual of Memorial Day was to begin. For indeed it is a ritual, a mode of remembrance that is practiced across America, one we all know by heart. Color guards are called to attention. Silence descends. Taps are played, in this case echo taps, with each stanza reinforced by a distant bugle. Taps finish. Silence descends again. Then the "Present arms" and the command to fire. One. Two. Three. Each round explodes and echoes across the blue water. "Order arms." The ship's bell tolls. All the vets, men and women, stand at attention. A bagpipe band rings out and marches in a circle with a lone piper. Silence returns. The high school band plays "God Bless America," as everyone sings to the brilliant blue, cloudless sky above the circling pines that ring the island. Again silence, as the color guards march off, one at a time. Then the bagpipes wail and the high school band's snare drums beat the retreat. It's over. Not a few moist eyes are seen.

It may be that my memory is faulty, but it seems that in my youth, after World War II, Memorial Day was personified by this ritual. It was not a day of hot dogs and beaches, but of a bit of work, as flowers, almost always geraniums, and flags were carried to cemeteries. There, ceremonies were brief, like this one, with a few short speeches. For even politicians, like Vero's mayor, understood the need for solemn dignity. Memorial Day was a serious affair, often accompanied by graveside prayers.

In contrast, I recall, the Fourth of July back then was the big holiday, the one that was turned into a weekend if possible, the one with a parade, long speeches, hot dogs, hamburgers, bunting, and bands the day long at the town park, crowned by evening fireworks. There was ritual, too, as the veterans, National Guard, Armed Forces reserves, school bands, 4-H clubs, and Shriners all marched. Back then, the Fourth was a national day, one of lighter mood than Memorial Day. I suppose one could say in the modern idiom that it was a day of in-your-face pride of country. Now it seems that the Fourth has disappeared, like the friends of my youth. Indeed, it is difficult to recall a real Fourth, except that God-awful one held for the Statue of Liberty, a monument to the French, not the American, Revolution, wherein naked girls tap-danced and celebrities sang—the kind of celebration you see in Third World dictatorships to celebrate the day of the *coup d'état* when the tyrant triumphed, a day that President and Mrs. Marcos planned and reveled in. That ill-conceived Fourth embarrassed me with its assumption that Hollywood and vaudeville represent the American Dream.

Thus, all we have left today for a day of national ritual is Memorial Day—the one annual national Sabbath, so to speak. The Fourth seems to be an embarrassment to our elites; I guess it's considered anti-English or something. As for Memorial Day, the good thing about it is that no one of any importance attends the ceremonies, so no one much worries about it. Who cares about those who do go, mostly older men, grey-haired, paunchy, lower-middle class, wearing Legion or Marine Corps League caps or Vietnam fatigues? If 200 people attend out of 50,000 in a town or county, it's a big turnout. The ones who go really want to be there. It's definitely not a chic event. For instance, the Vero newspaper and police station, when we called the night before, didn't know what time their community's ceremony would start. The person at the newspaper didn't seem to care.

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Throughout the land, Memorial Day is kept up by a group of institutions that are so much a part of the scenery that few people even notice them any more: primarily the veterans' clubs, the Legion, and the VFW, whose posts nationwide decorate veterans' graves, provide bugle and rifle teams for veterans' funerals, support Little League and Senior League baseball and softball teams, and tend guard over the traditions and rituals of life and death in America: the flag, the graves, the bunting, the bugle.

These groups also give their members nice places to gather, where they can eat and drink inexpensively. They also make low-cost insurance programs available, and, via their magazines, keep veterans apprised of issues of interest, as well as of annual meetings of their erstwhile military units. (For example, I thus joined the 4th Armored Division Association.) What's nice about the Legion and the VFW is that they go on with their remembrance and reflection whether the wars are popular, like the recent Persian Gulf conflict, or unpopular, like Korea and Vietnam. For to them, remembrance is about sacrifice, and sacrifice means just that, including sacrifice of popularity.

In the last analysis, however, Legion and VFW posts are the mainstay not only of warrior America, but also of all the signs and symbols that touch all Americans, sooner or later: taps; the call to the colors and retreat; pipe bands playing "Gary Owen;" yellow ribbons; decorated graves. They are guardians of the symbols of the true America, even if some segments of our society fail to recognize this. For the truth is that in a clutch, the traditions of the VFW and Legion posts have more to do with the country than do the traditions of show business. How *kitsch* are the Oscars, how dignified is taps. It is the difference between those who play soldiers, like John Wayne, Ronald Reagan, and Kevin Costner, and those who actually fought. Only in America are the former honored more than the latter.

Later that night, my wife and I walked out onto the Fort Pierce jetty, a stone-strewn finger of land that extends about an eighth of a mile into the ocean at the mouth of an inlet. The moon gleamed high above, as figures silently cast their lines into water where schools of snook seemed to be gathering. Like Vero's Memorial Park, the Fort Pierce jetty is not a fancy place. Still, it has a certain attraction for men, women, and children of all ages, races, and income levels, who gather there in a universal ritual called fishing. Haitians, Cubans, Poles, WASPs, and God-knows-what-else are to be found there. All income groups, yuppies and six-pack buyers alike.

Strolling on the jetty that night I realized what had been missing from the Memorial Day service that morning: no one had mentioned that the Cold War is over, that the bombers and rockets no longer are on alert, that the fleet is on a peacetime watch, that, for the first time since Pearl Harbor, the threat of war has receded. Bells should have been rung at the churches; *Te Deums* or "Onward Christian Soldiers" or the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" ought to have been sung; and thanks ought to have been rendered that this danger to our Republic has disappeared. Our nation is at peace, our veterans are at peace, and our fishermen can fish in peace.

I recalled the graveyard at home with its veterans' flags on Memorial Day, where nearly half the graves still are decorated each year, after a century of war; and I thought about all those who fought or stood guard, all those who went to Flanders or Normandy or Tarawa, all those who died near Panmunjom or Hue, all those who patrolled the DMZs of the Cold War. And I concluded that they had not sacrificed in vain. Peace had been achieved at last. Whatever would now come would be new, but the past had ended well. What had started at Sarajevo and had spread to St. Petersburg and Berlin and across the entire world, as far as Hanoi and Peking, had ended; and now, on this Memorial Day, that infamous town itself was aflame, now at the end of the century, when peace was on hand. Strange the symmetry of it all.

James J. Novak is a writer who divides his time between Florida and New York.

LIBERAL ARTS

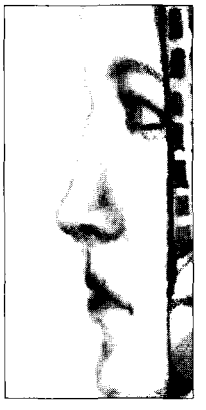

IMAGE ENHANCEMENT?

Revisionism in the name of political correctness strikes again. According to the *Chicago Tribune* last January, Illinois State University is changing its 128-year-old motto from *The Canterbury Tales* to purge it of alleged sexism. The phrase "And gladly would he learn and teach," adopted by the state's oldest public university in 1865, has been replaced by "Gladly we learn and teach."

Not quite as eloquent as the original motto (an Americanized version of Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th-century line), the new phrase is the result of an "image and identity" study that cost ISU $73,000. In an effort to develop fundraising strategies for the university, the firm of Downey, Weeks and Toomey interviewed 130 students, parents, and alumni and concluded that there was a desire to make the university motto non-sexist. Led by an English professor who argues that the Chaucer quotation was directed at the "Clerk of Oxenford," a specific individual, a number of students protested the revision, but to no avail.

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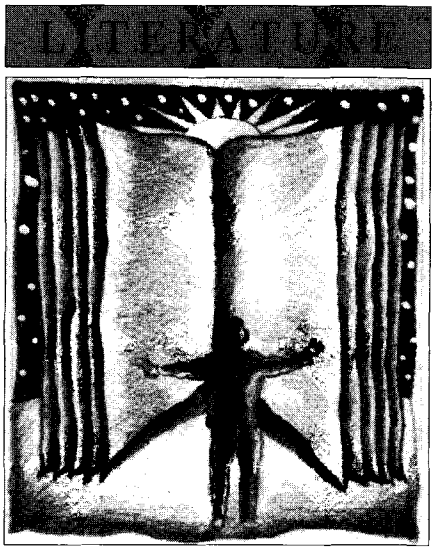

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Quest for Bijou O'Conor

by Jeffrey Meyers

F. Scott Fitzgerald's Mistress Lives Again

In 1975 an eccentric old lady who lived near Brighton, England, with a Pekinese gave a taped interview about her affair in 1930 with Scott Fitzgerald. Recent Fitzgerald biographers have mentioned the evocatively named Bijou O'Conor and quoted bits from the tape, but no one has discovered anything significant about her background, appearance, or character.

The husky, upper-class voice on the tape intrigued me, and I wondered what had brought them together and how Fitzgerald had fitted into *Bijou*'s life. Happening to be in London last summer, I tried to find out more about her. As I have often discovered, someone who seems utterly obscure, dead, and forgotten can be brought to life once you tap into the institutions that survive her: in this case, her family, an Oxford college, and the Foreign Office.

I began with the *Who's Who* entry on Bijou's father, Sir Francis Elliot (1851-1940). Grandson of the second Earl of Minto, he rowed for Balliol College, entered the diplomatic service, served as consul-general in Sofia from 1895 to 1903 and as minister in Athens from 1903 to 1917. *Debrett's Peerage* adds that Bijou, whose real name was Violet Marie, was born in 1896 (the same year as Fitzgerald), the fourth and youngest daughter of Sir Francis. In 1920 she married Lieutenant Edmund O'Conor, R.N., of Charleville, Dunleer, County Louth (the O'Conors are no longer there), who died in 1924. Though widowed at age 28, she never remarried.

I first telephoned the present Earl of Minto, whom I imagined pacing the armor-lined corridors of his crumbling castle in the Highlands. Instead of the servant I had expected, the Earl himself answered the phone. Though he had not heard of Bijou, his curiosity was aroused by my questions about his family. He spoke to me for a leisurely 20 minutes and shrewdly suggested various lines of inquiry.

Following the Earl's advice, I wrote to the records department of the British Foreign Office, which sent me the address of Bijou's niece in Exeter. *Debrett's* provided the address of the Honourable Mary Alington Marten, O.B.E., the daughter of Bijou's friend Napier Alington. But Mary Alington was only 11 years old when her father died and knew nothing about Bijou. William Furlong, who had conducted the taped interview with Bijou, had heard about her by chance through a mutual friend in Hove, near Brighton. He characterized her as a mysterious and rather ruthless woman, who responded to male attention and seemed genuinely concerned about the welfare of Fitzgerald's daughter, Scottie. Furlong promised to look through the original transcripts and to send me any new material he could find.

My first breakthrough came from Claire Eaglestone of Balliol College, who was intrigued by my query about Sir Francis and, putting my letter on the top of her correspondence, rang me at once. Though Sir Francis had no sons, his grandson had (as I suspected) gone to his old college. Captain William Elliot-Young (1910-42) had been killed in the war, but his son, the 10th baronet, Sir William Neil Young, reportedly lived in London. When he did not answer my letter (which had been forwarded to his new home in Edinburgh), I rang him at the Saudi International Bank. They told me he had moved to Coutts Bank, which put me right through to him.

Sir William was in the midst of his work but, like the Earl of Minto, was fascinated by his great-aunt and disposed to chat about her. He described her extravagance, her alcoholism, her mythomania—and her wooden leg. Most importantly, he put me in touch with Gillian Plazzota, the former wife of Bijou's son. Mrs. Plazzota told me more about Bijou's striking appearance and bohemian character, and about Bijou's son, Michael O'Conor. He had been abandoned by his mother, brought up in the south of France by his stern Scottish grandparents, and cared for by a nanny until he was sent to school in England. She gave me his phone number, but suggested I "be gentle with him, and ask about photographs and letters before requesting information about Bijou."

Though slightly suspicious at first, Michael O'Conor—curious about why I was so interested in Bijou, amused by the circuitous trail I had followed to find him, and eager to hear what I knew about Bijou and Fitzgerald—agreed to see me the following morning in Surrey. He had been educated at prep school, Radley, and Oxford, become a petroleum engineer, and worked for the Kuwait Oil Company and for Shell in Venezuela. Many of the oil wells he had built and supervised had been recently destroyed in the Persian Gulf War. He showed me a photograph of Bijou's Pekinese, a pet he had inherited on her death but, significantly enough, did not have one of his mother. Michael said that the most serious of Bijou's numerous lovers was a Russian photographer,

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Vladimir Molokhovets (the spelling is uncertain), who had a studio on Wilton Street in Belgravia. Hoping his family might have letters from or a photograph of Bijou, I searched for his name in reference books and rang the photographic department of the National Portrait Gallery, but was unable to find any trace of him.

When I telephoned Sir William Young the following day to thank him for his help and to ask whether he had a photo of Bijou, he suggested I also see her first cousin, the elderly Edwardian gentleman Sir Brinsley Ford, a distinguished art historian and trustee of the National Gallery. Sir Brinsley told me family stories and his firsthand memories of Bijou. At one point in our interview his attractive granddaughter made a dramatic appearance and kissed his bald dome in greeting. She was delighted to learn that her second cousin had been Fitzgerald's mistress and that her highly respectable family had included an eccentric rebel.

The conversations with Michael O'Conor and Sir Brinsley Ford enabled me to reconstruct Bijou's life before she met Fitzgerald as well as to follow her strange career after their affair had ended. Bijou was born in Sofia while her father was serving there as British consul-general. A French nurse provided her nickname just after the baby was born. But when she presented the little Bijou to Sir Francis, he said that she looked more like a toad than a jewel. Educated privately by tutors and governesses, Bijou became an outstanding linguist. Though extremely intelligent, she lacked common sense. The daughter of a strait-laced Calvinistic Scot, and very different from her three older sisters, she passionately rejected her conventional family background.

During the Great War Bijou entertained her sophisticated friends, who would have been bored by their very proper elders downstairs, in her bedroom in the Athens Legation. Compton Mackenzie, then engaged in espionage in Greece, recalled her arty set in his *First Athenian Memories* (1931): "She was the youngest of Sir Francis' daughters and the only one not yet married. In her room tucked away at the top of the Legation the social observer could have discovered the trend of the post-war generation's decorative taste." She represented, to Mackenzie, "the restless advance of youth in spite of the war."

Bijou married Edmund O'Conor, a professional naval officer, in 1920 and accompanied him when he was stationed in China. She acquired an expert knowledge of Chinese and, claiming that she had been given two Pekinese by the Empress of China, developed a lifelong passion for the pets who followed her everywhere. Lieutenant O'Conor had been infected with tuberculosis during the war and died of that disease in Australia in 1924. Bijou's son Michael was born after her husband's death. During their rare meetings, Bijou always spoke French to the boy. He learned his first spoken word, *merde*, from listening to Bijou exclaim whenever she made a mistake in typing. Though Bijou felt sorry for the lonely and unsettled Scottie Fitzgerald, who had been ignored and rejected by her mother and brought up by nannies, she lacked maternal feeling for her own child.

Bijou was thin, chic, and *jolie-laide*, with fine features and soft brown eyes. Very social, a bit intolerant, and rather snobbish, she had rare charm and an air of mystery. She was a great character and an amusing raconteur who kept her circle of intelligent and often homosexual friends riveted by her fascinating conversation. She smoked heavily, enjoyed drinking binges, was wildly extravagant whenever she had any money, and always left a trail of debts behind her. She may even have served time in prison for this offense.

In about 1933 Bijou told Sir Brinsley Ford that Michael had a bad case of whooping cough and needed to recover in the mild climate of Penzance, and he gave her 50 pounds to take the boy on a recuperative holiday. A few days later a friend, who did not know where Bijou had obtained the sudden windfall, told Sir Brinsley that she had lavishly entertained a group of friends at the Ritz. The publisher Anthony Blond recalled (in a personal letter) that "she was quite small, quite sharp, and quite drunk."

Bijou lived on a small naval pension and on whatever cash she could extract from her unwilling father. She may have caught tuberculosis from her late husband, spent some time in a sanatorium in Devos, and was also treated for alcoholism in Switzerland, where she met Scott Fitzgerald. In the fall of 1930, during his third and final trip to Europe, Fitzgerald's wife Zelda had a mental breakdown and became a patient at Prangins clinic, in Nyon on Lake Geneva. Fitzgerald was living nearby in Lausanne, visiting her as often as possible and writing furiously to pay her expensive medical bills.

The wild, spendthrift Bijou—whom he had first met in the south of France and at the Closerie des Lilas in the Latin Quarter in the mid-1920's—reminded Fitzgerald of his wife. And Bijou, like Fitzgerald, was often irresponsible, lived beyond her means, borrowed money, drank heavily, behaved scandalously, and did not care what people thought about her.

When Fitzgerald met Bijou in Lausanne he had just suffered the worst year of his marriage: Zelda's devastating criticism of his sexual equipment and sexual performance, her balletomania, her emotional estrangement from him, her unnaturally strong attachment to her dancing teacher Madame Egorova, and her terrifying collapse into insanity. Though Bijou brought out the negative side of Fitzgerald—his uncontrolled drinking and wild behavior—she also, during a major crisis of his life, satisfied his deepest needs. She not only alleviated his tormenting guilt about Zelda, but also provided affection and sexual reassurance during their "roaring, screaming affair" in the Grand Hôtel de la Paix.

The aristocratic Bijou smoked cigarettes in a long amber holder, carried around a half-paralyzed Pekinese, and frightened all the hotel guests and servants. She later remembered Fitzgerald typing away in her hotel room, fueled by bottle after bottle of gin. Bijou claimed, in her taped interview, that she and Fitzgerald had visited Prangins—where all the patients dressed for dinner and sat between the doctors and nurses—though they could have precipitated another breakdown if Zelda had guessed they were lovers. Bijou also recalled that Fitzgerald bought a Persian kitten for Zelda who, in a moment of uncontrolled rage, killed it by bashing its head against a wall.

Fitzgerald portrayed Bijou and her friend Napier Alington—whose birth and death dates (1896-1940) would be the same as Fitzgerald's—as the widowed Lady Capps-Karr and Bopes, the Marquis of Kinkallow, in "The Hotel Child" (1931). Alington, a dark, good-looking baron and wealthy landowner, belonged to a fast set and was regarded by some as a wicked man. He was paint-

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ed by Augustus John in 1938 wearing an elegant smoking jacket and bow tie, with a long face, creased cheeks, full lips, and a prominent oval chin.

"Practically the whole damn [story] is true, bizarre as it seems," Fitzgerald said. "Lord Alington and the famous Bijou O'Conor were furious at me for putting them in." In real life, in about 1918, careless with a cigarette, Bijou had burnt the ceiling of the guest room in the house of Sir Brinsley Ford's father. Bijou must have told Fitzgerald about this embarrassing incident, for in his story Lady Capps-Karr and the Marquis Kinkallow are ejected from a Swiss hotel for starting a fire while attempting to cook some potato chips in alcohol.

The satiric caricatures of Lord Alington and Bijou O'Conor, inspired by Fitzgerald's reaction against Bijou after their stormy affair had ended, took more serious and substantial form in *Tender Is the Night* (1934). In that novel she reappears as the fragile, tubercular, decadent Lady Caroline Sibley-Biers, who performs a dance of death as the Sepoys assault the ruined fort. The phrase, and Lady Capps-Karr's favorite expression, "After all, a chep's a chep and a chum's a chum"—Fitzgerald's bizarre notion of a quintessential English expression, which both Michael O'Conor and Sir Brinsley Ford agree Bijou would never have actually said—occur in both "The Hotel Child" and *Tender Is the Night*, linking Lady Capps-Karr and Lady Caroline Sibley-Biers to their common model, Bijou O'Conor.

Sir Francis Elliot, Napier Alington, and Scott Fitzgerald all died in 1940. Most of Bijou's possessions—including her Picasso drawings and the letters Fitzgerald wrote to her in the early 1930's—had been stored in Druce's furniture warehouse when her father returned from France in 1936 and were destroyed during the London Blitz in 1940. After transport routes had suddenly been changed during the Blitz, Bijou was knocked down one dark night by a bus. Her leg had to be amputated, and she was fitted with a wooden one. When she sued London Transport for reckless driving, the latter's lawyer enraged the judge (who later became Lord Denning) by claiming she had suffered "a trifling injury," and she was awarded substantial damages that supported her for many years. One of her *louche* friends once persuaded her to smuggle contraceptives into Ireland in the hollow of her artificial leg.

During the war Bijou—a notoriously indiscreet but highly gifted linguist in French, Russian, Polish, Greek, and Chinese—worked for the Russian department of military intelligence at the War Office in Northumberland Street, off Trafalgar Square. She became a great friend of Major-General Sir Guy Glover and of Major-General Edward Spears (whose wife, the novelist Mary Borden, had been Wyndham Lewis's mistress before her marriage).

She resumed her luxurious but parasitic life in Monaco in the late 1940's and early 1950's. At the end of that decade she spent several uneasy months with Michael, who had scarcely known his mother, at his home in Nottinghamshire. She planned but never wrote her autobiography, to be called *Interlude in Attica*. After living alone at 88 Eccleston Square near Victoria Station, she finally settled into a near-penniless existence with a circle of old-age pensioners in Hove, where she died shortly after her taped interview in the fall of 1975.

Christopher Clairmonte, who painted two portraits of the elderly Bijou, recalled the squalid end of her adventurous life in the *Sunday Times Magazine* of July 3, 1983: "She was nearly blind, and had an artificial leg as a result of an accident, so there was not a lot she could do for herself. We turned back a rug, and found it was a heaving mass of insects, so we took it straight out and dumped it in a skip. The place was a mass of dog messes because her Peke—she always had Pekes and adored them—hadn't been able to get out regularly."

Despite her brief appearance in Fitzgerald's life, Bijou was more important to Fitzgerald than he was to her. Though he reacted against her arrogant attitude and reckless way of life, and satirized her in his fiction, he desperately needed her companionship and enjoyed her wit and charm. Fitzgerald was one of Bijou's more interesting lovers. She recognized herself in his works, made him the subject of her own amusing stories, and survived to have the last word about their affair.

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Talking Facts

by Paul Gottfried

The New Anti-Semitism

In October 1992 *Commentary* printed an "observation" by David Glasner, "Hayek and the Conservatives," which abounded in glaring disinformation. The pictures there given of the America First movement as a rallying point for anti-Semitic kooks and of the Old Right as a collection of bigoted psychopaths, pending the arrival of the neoconservatives and their Hayekian predecessors, illustrate one of the ugliest characteristics of the left—its periodical reconstruction of the past for the sake of present ideological agendas. Never mind the well-documented facts provided by Justus Doenecke, Wayne Cole, and other historians of the American isolationists: that America First consisted heavily of liberal Republicans; that it included leftists like Chester Bowles and Norman Thomas; and that its leadership was emphatic about discouraging anti-Semites from joining.

Moreover, Hayek was not the figure, as Glasner contends, who turned American conservatives around. The Austrian economist's brief against socialism was thought to fit into an already established conservative case for limited constitutional government. Many isolationists believed they were making that case when they opposed FDR's interventionist policies. For them those policies rep-

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resented, rightly or wrongly, a continuation of Woodrow Wilson's democratic imperialism. Not anti-Semitism, but opposition to an expansive, centralized regime lay behind this conservative protest to what has since been named the "welfare-warfare state." Though it may be argued that conservative isolationists underestimated both Hitler's aggressiveness and his capacity for meanness, they did foresee long-range political trends at home.

But, in point of fact, not all pre-50's conservatives were isolationists. Southern conservatives, like Carter Glass and Harry Byrd, were Anglophile interventionists; and Robert Taft, though reluctant to get involved in European affairs, believed in the need for our government to carry a big stick in the Western hemisphere. Though it is generous of Glasner to exempt Taft from the various hate-crimes he ascribes to the rest of the pre-50's right, it may be puzzling to some why he grants this particular dispensation. Perhaps Burt Blumert's explanation is the only one that makes sense: somebody must have told Glasner that Taft strongly supported the state of Israel during the last five years of his life.

Most surprising to me is that *Commentary* would publish an essay with so many obvious distortions. It is one thing to berate everyone and his cousin for not confessing to their German genes, an alleged sin of Pat Buchanan, or for being insensitive to self-designated victims. Yet it is quite another to misrepresent entire movements in order to make one's dotty obsessions appear respectable. *Commentary* may have crossed that line, if not for the first time then most dramatically, by publishing Glasner's hastily done screed.

Even more importantly, it gave proof of how far neoconservatives will go in smearing everyone on the right but themselves (if one is allowed to pretend for the moment that they belong on the right). In their portrayal of the America Firsters and of the opponents of free trade, Glasner and the neocons invent their own history. Neither isolationism nor protectionism was a peculiarly conservative position before the present division between paleos and neocons. That neocon demigod Abraham Lincoln was a more explicit protectionist than Pat Buchanan. And ditto for Bill Clinton, to whose presidential campaign neocons flocked in droves. When Clinton addressed economic issues in his last presidential debate, he spoke out sharply against the trade agreement with Mexico. Still it was not he, but Ross Perot, whom Morton Kondracke blew up into a "nativist, xenophobe protectionist." That goes to show that not all protectionists, but only those not endorsed by the *New Republic*, are guilty of xenophobia. In any case, neocons should note that at least some old-fashioned conservatives fervently backed free trade. The Southern planter class seceded from the Union partly over the issue of tariffs imposed by protectionist Yankees on the hapless agrarian South. But Glasner does not find this history usable for his narrowly partisan argument.

In his partial defense it should be pointed out that Glasner's fixation on anti-Semitism is all too typical of our opinion elites. The harping on this matter by Glasner and *Commentary* has its equivalents in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *New Republic*, and, recently, *National Review*. In all these publications we are told of a pathological hatred of Jews that extends from Christian antiquity, through the Nazi era, to the present. The once and future bearer of this anti-Semite poison, one would gather from our press, is the right as unreformed by neocon leadership and sensitivities. Those in America who incarnate the ancient menace are, among others, Pat Buchanan and, according to *Time* (claiming to present the views of "other conservatives"), the Rockford Institute.

Though anti-Semitism has raged in other societies, it has never been more than a marginal problem in the United States. In comparison to the mob violence suffered by some ethnic Catholics in 19th-century America and the massive professional discrimination I have seen visited on their descendants in academic departments, American Jews have not fared badly, even in relation to other whites. Their worst complaints have been about past residential and professional discrimination and about the operation of ethnic quotas at some universities earlier in the century. Though none of this deserves to be defended, several points should be kept in mind. The form of discrimination to which American Jews refer was primarily social rather than religious: it typically affected the families of recent Jewish immigrants as well as of non-Jewish immigrants rather than the descendants of already established American Jews; and whatever limited exclusion some Jews in some situations may have suffered in the United States has not kept American Jewry from rising to the top socioeconomically and enjoying the goodwill of its Christian neighbors. Though many Jews feel deeply "alienated" from American Christian society, the fault is arguably theirs rather than that of a society that has frenetically tried to accommodate Jewish identity and uneasiness.

In any case I agree with Jacob Neusner when he argues that anti-Semitism has ceased to be a real issue in American life, give or take a few nuts in Idaho or some civil rights spokespersons who seem to be impersonating Jewish liberals when they're not ranting against "hymies." Jewish civil libertarians should feel particularly gratified to be here and not in Israel. Most American Jews, who are not of the Orthodox persuasion, would not have the freedom to practice their religion—that is, would not have their rituals legally recognized—in a Jewish country. In Israel only the Orthodox rabbinate has the legal authority to perform Jewish weddings and to define Jewish identity for resident citizens of the Jewish homeland.

In view of this situation, one might think that discussions about anti-Semitism as a significant American problem would be winding down. Complaints about intermarriage do seem understandable given the documentable preference shown by young American Jews for non-Jewish spouses. Harder to comprehend, however, are the pervasive references to anti-Semitism as an urgent national danger that one reads in the columns of Richard Cohen, A. M. Rosenthal, Charles Krauthammer, Norman Podhoretz, William Safire, and other syndicated journalists. By now the name for this ancient prejudice has come to stand for other traits; nonetheless, it has become apparent that by assailing a political opponent as an anti-Semite, it is possible to inflict irreparable harm on him. Certainly one cannot deny that history affords all too many grim examples of real anti-Semitism, culminating in the Nazis' murder of close to six million Jews. More problematic is fathoming how such catastrophes derive from the assorted policy errors and social faux pas we are led to believe betray a Nazi gestalt. These ominous indiscretions now include disagreeing with statements by the American Zionist

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lobby, rattling Norman Podhoretz, quoting the ancient Jews to approve alternative lifestyles, and having been on the American right before Midtown Manhattan took it over.

There are three, partly overlapping groups that have suffered in particular from charges of anti-Semitism. In all three cases, these groups have had the same disadvantage: little access to the media and therefore a lack of opportunity to present their views in mass newspapers and magazines. But not all of them have had the same row to hoe. The first, critics of Israeli expansionist parties, have received an occasional hearing on news programs, and though efforts have been made by AIPAC, neocons, and some liberal journalists to liken these critics to Nazi sympathizers, they do continue to enjoy the presumptive benefit of their association, in most cases, with the political left. This is particularly true of Palestinian spokesmen, who often sound politically correct except on the question of Zionism. Edward Said remains a celebrated professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University and in good standing as a liberal, despite his activities as a Palestinian spokesman. We might also note that the liberal Democratic candidate for Senate, Lynn Yeakel, attracted considerable Jewish support in Pennsylvania, while being associated with the outspokenly pro-Palestinian Board of Directors of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. Yeakel's credentials as a pro-choice feminist offset for Jewish voters her past associations with critics of Israel. In fact her social liberalism allowed Yeakel to compete successfully for Jewish votes against a liberal Republican incumbent who had consistently taken AIPAC positions. Included in this group, too, are Israelis who have criticized the hard-line positions taken by the former Likud government, a coalition that was turned out of power despite the impassioned backing of American Zionist organizations. It is therefore hard to make the anti-Semitic label stick to those in group one.

Other groups who have been susceptible to what Murray Rothbard calls the "smearbund" include disparagers of gay-lib and traditionalists who have run afoul of well-connected neocons. The paleo presidential candidate Pat Buchanan was labeled an anti-Semite after falling into both groups. More accurately, he fell into all three, having faulted the West Bank policy of Israel's Likud government while simultaneously attacking alternative lifestyles. To some degree, the combined liberal-neocon campaign against Buchanan has now appropriated this neocon definition of anti-Semitism.

For years *Commentary* whacked away at the gay lobby, publishing without constraint such debunkers of it as Samuel McCracken and Michael Frumenti. With some justification, the leftist Sid Blumenthal spoke of the neocons as being fixated on gays, in the same way they exploded each time they encountered critics of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. But in spite of this once settled attitude, some neocons and movement conservatives are now speaking gently about gay rights. Both William Buckley and the *New Republic*, particularly since the arrival of its proudly homosexual editor-in-chief Andrew Sullivan, have presented sympathetic treatments of gays. For that matter, so have many other celebrities who have been tireless in their defense of Israeli foreign policies, such as Alan Dershowitz, A. M. Rosenthal, and former New York mayor Ed Koch. The equation of homophobia and anti-Semitism has long been operative in our press; William Raspberry and Richard Cohen stressed this alleged link in their fiery polemics against Buchanan. In deference to victimology, moreover, literature on the Holocaust has come to put the suffering of homosexuals under Hitler only slightly below that of European Jewry. One does not have to go to Dershowitz's egregious autobiography *Chutzpah* in search of this revisionist view. A nationally respected Holocaust authority whom I heard speak in a synagogue in Bethesda, Maryland, Deborah E. Lipstadt, explained that Hitler's persecution was aimed at gays, feminists, and blacks, but not at the "anti-Semitic Poles." It is simply not true that American Jews do not want to share the Holocaust with other groups. They are quite willing to share it with anyone on the current list of designated victims.

Because of the situation described above, there may be a growing tendency on the respectable right to accept homophobia as symptomatic of right-wing anti-Semitism. On August 19, 1992, an attack on Buchanan appeared in the *New York Times* written by Michael Lind, executive editor of the neocon *National Interest*. Though his dyspeptic comments on "conservatism's ugly face" looked familiar on the *Times*' editorial page, one trait distinguished them from the other op-ed pieces on the same topic. This piece was written by a self-described conservative.

Contrary to the polite fib told on the Old Right, the neocons did not "occupy" the conservative movement. They were invited in to carry out their glorious *Anschluss*, cheered on by some of the most influential conservatives of the 70's. Neoconservatives were not intruders, but rather the thought police whom movement conservatives of the 70's, 80's, and 90's have worked hard to obey. Like the subjects in Hobbes' state of nature, these morally divided and emotionally insecure individuals needed a commonwealth in which to live together. As fate would have it, neoconservatives were happy to provide one, in exchange for the surrender of their subjects' natural freedom.

The inhabitants of this commonwealth lack the "intellectual discrimination" that Claes Ryn and George Panichas see as vanishing on the right. But they also lack even that elemental moral sense that helps to distinguish adults from children. Thus movement conservatives go after old friends for not proffering the approved neocon opinions about the state of the world. And they refrain from asking questions that their mortal god, the neocon sovereign, considers to be dangerously divisive. For those who try to open what solemn assemblies of neocons have decided to close there is only one response: consignment to the fever swamps of anti-Semitic insensitivity into which "responsible conservative opinion" has put anyone on the right who doesn't quite fit into the world as conceived by David Glasner, Michael Lind, and their royal masters.

The terms anti-Semitism and insensitivity mean no more in the present conservative movement than whatever offends the sovereign. Whenever a well-heeled and socially important neocon accuses anyone on the right of being anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist, no movement conservative in good standing ever asks for proof before joining in the chorus of condemnation. In Lew Rockwell's satirical glossary of neocon language, we are reminded that, for neoconservatives, every turn of speech and historical association refers back to their own parochial view of reality, starting with a laughably narrow view of what is good or bad for Jews. By now that se-

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mantical and historical framework has become the new foundation for what is intended to be a respectable American conservatism. Rockwell's spoof may already be the catechism for young conservatives.

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POLITICS

Jack Kemp's Mistaken Identity

by Jeffrey A. Tucker

President Bush suffered fierce attacks from conservative quarters as the 1992 election year came to a close, and many on the right even celebrated his loss. Fine enough, but after the election the message on the conference circuit and on the nation's op-ed pages was that conservatives' great hope for 1996 is Jack F. Kemp.

The conservative "leaders" who say Kemp is the natural choice include columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, for whom Kemp is a longtime source of information and leaks. "Out of the wreckage of George Bush's botched campaign for reelection," they wrote, "Jack Kemp has emerged as the clear Republican heir apparent." Only he can "pull his party together." Four days later, syndicated columnist Mona Charen chimed in. "Mr. Bush governed more like Michael Dukakis than like Ronald Reagan," she wrote in the *Washington Times*, adding: "Now the party can do what it ought to have done in 1988—consolidate behind Jack Kemp."

Kempophilia has spread outside conservative quarters. Barbara Jordan, the black feminist lawyer with the hybrid Texas-British accent and the most highly touted speaker at the Democratic Convention, was asked her opinion of Kemp's social programs in *World* magazine. "I know Jack Kemp very well," she answered. "I have no quarrel with the type of investment Jack Kemp talks about." Henry Cisneros, his successor as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, told the *Washington Times*, "I admire a lot about Jack Kemp." Such opinions add credibility to Fred Barnes's claim in *USA Weekend* that Kemp is the "liberals' favorite conservative."

Kemp used the occasion of this post-election coronation to go after possible challengers to his presidential hopes. For example, he had this to say of Patrick J. Buchanan's roundly denounced, but relatively mild, Republican convention speech: "Not good, not good, not good at all." "The answer to L.A. is not more guns," Kemp said. Buchanan "sounded like he wanted to line people up against the wall and shoot them." Kemp confessed: "If that were my party, I wouldn't want to be in it."

If by that Kemp meant that those who loot private property should not be punished by death, it is a position held with some degree of self-interest. Judged by his tenure as Secretary of HUD, Kemp would already be six feet under ground. According to the Office of Management and the Budget, total HUD outlays shot from $19.6 billion in fiscal year 1989 to a forecasted $28.1 billion for fiscal year 1993, for a 43 percent increase. HUD spending as a percentage of the total budget increased from 1.1 percent to 2 percent in the Kemp years. In Bush's last budget, HUD was the fastest growing cabinet-level agency in government. Clearly, Kemp managed to do what no liberal could have gotten away with. Yet on occasion, even liberals balked at some of his free-spending ambitions, such as his plans to give every poor person a housing project to manage at taxpayer expense and to vastly increase spending on the "homeless."

HUD's annual budget at the end of Lyndon Johnson's full term in office was a mere 2.5 percent of Kemp's. While liberals like to complain of "cuts" in HUD's budget under the Reagan administration, these were only minor. Thanks to Kemp, however, the agency now spends well over twice the annual amount it did at the end of the Carter era.

Moreover, revelations of HUD financial irregularities under Kemp failed to elicit the kind of scorn directed at Samuel Pierce when problems cropped up during his tenure as Reagan's director of HUD. In 1992, the Inspector General discovered an unreported surplus of $1.2 billion in the Section 8 housing subsidy fund. Yet, to get more money, Kemp had claimed a shortfall of $407 million. It was the third consecutive year that billions went unaccounted for. One month after the 1992 election, the Inspector General issued a new audit that warned "another HUD scandal is a distinct possibility." Here's to *Business Week*, the only periodical I know of that took note of Kemp's poor management practices. "Kemp needs to spend less time proselytizing on conservative causes and more on HUD's books," suggested Christina Del Valle in her column. It's no wonder Washington's budget analysts were constantly shocked at Kemp's enormous budget requests and at his griping at Congress for not giving him every dime he asked for.

Given her soft-socialist views, Barbara Jordan is right to have "no quarrel" with Kemp's programs. For example, under the label of housing privatization, he arranged for the transfer of billions to nonprofits to "restore" public housing projects and then manage them, even as he continued to build more houses at taxpayer expense. In the name of Enterprise Zones, which thankfully never passed Congress, he wanted to force states and localities to pour more welfare into the inner cities in exchange for favorable federal-tax treatment.

After the L.A. (race) riots, Bush spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, in an unguarded moment, criticized Great Society programs for making blacks worse off. Of Kemp's alleged alternative to the Great Society, only the *New York Times* came close to telling the truth. "Few seem to realize that Mr. Kemp's plans in some ways are quite similar" to LBJ's, wrote *Times* reporter Jason DeParle. His "housing proposals include heavy doses of social services like job

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training and anti-drug counseling. More pointedly, Mr. Kemp's enthusiasm for community organizing bears a striking, if unconscious, resemblance to the War on Poverty." In fact, the Great Society represented a compromise position that rejected the most extreme dreams of the left. More than welfare checks, the latter sector said, the underclass should get restricted home and business ownership. Rejected by Great Society liberals at the time, this extreme leftist view now has its champion in Kemp.

Would that Kemp's welfare policies *were* "unconscious." He consciously and frequently met with representatives of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), an Alinskyite organization to the far left of the political spectrum that advocates imposing race-based mortgage lending quotas on banks and other financial institutions. In the absence of explicit legislation to that effect, Kemp spent $1 million, over the objection of banking regulators, to hire teams of "testers" for sting operations on banks to check for racial discrimination. HUD had done this to renters for years, but rather than attack such invasion of privacy, which results in *de facto* lending quotas, Kemp broke new ground by dramatically expanding it.

If you complain about Kemp's big-spending, big-government programs, he will snap and tell you, as he told the *Wall Street Journal*, that "the economy of the inner city" is more important than "monomaniacally focusing on single-entry bookkeeping." To think conservatives used to care about such things as living within one's means.

Yet with Kemp, it is not so much a matter of budget priorities as it is of holding the *wrong* set of principles. You might think, for example, he would favor privatization of certain public assets. But when Dan Quayle nearly had L.A. mayor Tom Bradley convinced that the city should privatize its airport to raise money to pay for the riot cleanup, Kemp personally interceded to foil the plan. "I have never recommended that LAX be privatized," he told the *Washington Post*, presumably because that just might upset someone on the left who thinks airports ought to belong to everybody.

One of the many untold aspects of Kemp's HUD tenure is how he used his office to lead a crusade to reinvigorate private-sector labor unions. As only one example, he expanded the traditional interpretation of the Davis-Bacon Act, which resulted in numerous housing projects being classified as "development" (rather than "maintenance") projects, so that more work must be done by labor unions at union wages. A small regulatory change such as this allows the transfer of millions from taxpayers to union coffers, whereas a repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act, says Representative Cass Ballenger (R-NC), would save $1.3 billion. Only after relentless pressure from Representative Charles Stenholm (D-TX) and the National Right to Work Committee (NRWC) did Kemp begin to retract his plan to grant unions new subsidies. It is no wonder, then, that Kemp regards himself as "a labor union leader," as he told the *Washington Post*. "I'm from the Lane Kirkland wing of the Republican Party," he continued. Reed Larson of NRWC sums up the problem: "Kemp has repeatedly used the power of" his office "to advance the interests of union officials at public expense."

For all the criticism he levels at the right, and especially at Buchananites, Kemp cannot bring himself to criticize anyone seen publicly as being on his left. "Am I going to attack Bill Clinton or Hillary Clinton, or Al Gore or Tipper Gore?" he asked a *Washington Post* reporter with a "no" shake of his head. "They're all friends of mine."

Praise be to columnist Joe Sobran, who, along with his colleague Samuel Francis, is alone in expressing doubts about Kemp. Although Sobran supported Bush in 1988, he has since changed his mind. "I wish I could feel that Jack Kemp would lead the Reagan Revolution we still await," Sobran writes. "But judging by his record, he won't."

Given his record and his views, what can account for Kemp's popularity among conservatives? Partially it is due to ignorance. In his turf battles with the tax-increasing Budget Director Richard Darman and the negligent Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, Kemp benefited from being seen as a "free-market mole" inside the White House, as the *London Financial Times* put it. Many of his sincere supporters on the right have deluded themselves into believing that his liberalism is strategic and not principled. Others agree with Kemp on the need to lower the capital gains tax; but shouldn't conservatives be more than a special-interest lobby working for a handful of marginal policy changes?

There is, I suspect, another reason for Kemp's popularity among conservatives: it is part of a quiet but profound ideological shift that has taken place over the last several years. Washington's faux-right has moved ever leftward toward positions on domestic issues that any free-market observer of the Old School would instantly recognize as socialistic. The beginnings of this shift probably began, as Murray Rothbard argues, in the 50's, accelerating in the following two decades; but by today's standards even early-80's conservatism seems reactionary, now that neoconservativism defines respectability on the right. Back in those days—imagine!—people talked of abolishing agencies like the Department of Education and HUD.

"My mama told me I was born to be President of the United States," Kemp told the 1991 Conservative Leadership Conference, whose attendees gave him a standing ovation after he delivered the stump speech all his aides have since memorized. Heaven forfend. Bush was a pragmatic manager of the old-style Rockefeller variety. Kemp is a more ominous figure, a supply-side millenarian who imagines limitless possibilities for social uplift through the exercise of centralized state power. Pat Buchanan's observation that Kemp has "gone native" should properly be seen as an understatement, even if Kemp does get the Republican nomination in 1996.

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Ross Perot and Middle American Radicalism

by Donald Warren

For a few moments during last year's presidential election, it appeared that the American two-party system was headed for a meltdown. As the ineffectual Bush campaign drew to its merciful close, the resurgence of support for Ross Perot defied every principle of professional political punditry. In 1992, disaffected Middle Americans were key to the 19 percent of the popular vote garnered by the maverick independent can-

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didate.

Whether or not the self-styled "billionaire populist" consciously sought the role, he has inherited the mantle of leadership for disaffected Middle Americans. They had first appeared as a powerful force on the nation's political landscape with the 1968 presidential candidacy of George Wallace, who managed, without any formal organizational structure, to attain 13.5 percent of the total national vote.

In 1992, Middle Americans reappeared on the center stage of American politics. Their role both in 1994 and 1996 may prove to be a critical one. As an autonomous force whose allegiance to both major political parties is weak or nonexistent, their destiny may be to act as the catalyst for the major restructuring or even the abolition of our present party system.

Two decades ago Wallace supporters were described as being irrational working-class authoritarians whose rejection of the Establishment candidates (in that instance George McGovern and Richard Nixon) was greeted with derision by virtually all of the mainstream political analysts. When Michigan's primary saw Wallace triumph over the opposition of UAW leaders and liberal Democrats, the development was viewed as a political anomoly, when it was in fact the beginning of a major political realignment across the nation.

In the wake of these events of 20 years ago, I coined the term "Middle American Radicals," or MARs. The peculiar volatility of MARs, their adherence to elements of leftist and rightist ideology, led Establishment politicians to define their politics as a passing expression of protest or "irrational" frustration and fear. As a dangerous "other," they have been regarded as an alien presence within the normal body politic.

Yet my research has developed a description of MAR ideology that suggests a quite *rational* belief system: MARs view the very rich and the very poor as simultaneously responsible for their problems. On some issues, they are likely to take a liberal stand, and on others a conservative one. Their behavior may therefore appear irrational to anyone assuming that only the liberal-conservative distinction is rational.

A MAR, then, is essentially anyone who views his own well-being as threatened by a combination of economic elites on the one hand and governmental favoritism directed toward ethnic minorities on the other. While the Democratic Party is the embodiment of the latter syndrome, Republicans are seen as reflecting the former commitment. Given this "double squeeze," MARs become a highly volatile political group, which, when aroused, may provide a critical swing-vote in national elections.

There is strong and consistent evidence that, in the past two decades, and especially since 1987, a growing proportion of the American electorate holds exactly the beliefs enumerated above. The *Times-Mirror* election surveys, which employ a typology of voters that most closely resembles MARs, reflect the growth in this constituency: from 7 percent in the fall of 1987 to 15 percent on the eve of the November 1992 election. This segment of the public, which the T-M organization describes as "economically pressured," indicates they feel unrepresented and do not trust political officials. *Nearly half of this group expressed a preference for Ross Perot when he first entered the presidential race in May of last year.* Five months later, when the Texan had withdrawn from active campaigning, 15 percent remained supporters. This figure climbed to just under one in three when Perot reentered the political fray.

Ross Perot blasted a path through the demographic center of American society. His candidacy was nothing short of a political revolution. Among the largest and fastest-growing segments of the electorate—young independent-minded voters—Perot's support often equaled or exceeded that of the sitting President. What has become clear from exit-poll information and preelection surveys was that Ross Perot, not Bill Clinton, held center-stage for most of the electorate. Perot may have lost enormous support with the Samurai-like stroke of removing himself from active campaigning, but his reentry focused the attention of millions of citizens on the campaign and eventually prodded them to cast their votes.

Following Perot's prodigal return four weeks prior to the November election, and up until the last day of polling, there was a tendency to underestimate his strength with the electorate. Yet, a perusal of the campaign numbers from today's vantage point shows that what occurred last fall was nothing short of a political disaster for both major political parties. The 42nd President of the United States gained his office by obtaining the support of barely one-fourth of the potential electorate of the nation!

Perhaps most significant was the impact of the Perot candidacy on the nonvoter. While overall voting rose only a modest 4 percent, the evidence gleaned from state-by-state comparisons shows that of those 25 states where voting was significantly above the national average (59 percent or higher), in 22 instances the Perot vote was also markedly above his overall percentage. In those states with average or below-average voting levels, the Perot total was also average or lower. In the state of Maine, which showed the sharpest rise in voting compared to 1988 (an 11 percent increase), Perot had his highest level of support: 30 percent. In the highly populous states of California, New York, and Texas, voting was not much higher than in 1988. Perot's figures in these states (21, 16, and 22 percent, respectively) prevented what might have indeed been a dismal turnout.

Media attacks on both the entrance and exit of Perot from the presidential race were highly consistent, stressing his lack of sophistication, failure to "play by the rules," and general unpredictability. Initially, Bush and Clinton forces offered resounding criticism of the antidemocratic aspects of the billionaire's campaign as well as of his allegedly misguided followers. Yet with Perot's departure, they had nothing but praise for his volunteers, as the very vanguard of their own more timid and conventional efforts to mobilize citizens.

As an "undeclared" candidate, Ross Perot's standing in national polls peaked in early June at 36 percent, compared to Bush's 31 and Clinton's 27 percent. More importantly, Perot's support was garnered from precisely the two groups that had formed the core of the nonvoters of the past two decades. Of the "disaffected"—as they are referred to by *Times-Mirror* and who are comparable to our definition of MARs—49 percent reported they were supporters of Ross Perot, as well as 39 percent of "bystanders" (persons who have a history of sitting out elections). Not only was this a higher level than that found among the other sample groupings, but when queried on a two-way race of Bush and Clinton, 26 percent of the "disaffected" and 19 percent of the "bystanders" reported having no choice for President—far more than among the other types of

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persons defined by *Times-Mirror*.

When the Perot campaign peaked in late spring of last year, it seemed indeed to have moved nonvoters out of a quiescent state of disaffection. While protest voters have on occasion punctuated presidential races (evidenced by their lukewarm support for Jimmy Carter and certainly for George Bush), they then appeared on the verge of being formed into a massive social movement involving new levels of direct media impact and organizational sophistication.

Perot, having learned well the lessons of David Duke and Pat Buchanan (even employing the pollster of that candidate during the first phase of his breakthrough run), seemed poised by June to decimate the arrayed armies of the two major parties. Yet, somewhat akin to the merciful action displayed by the Germans at Dunkirk, he allowed the retreating forces to escape to fight him once again.

This pullout led to an endless parade of "I told you so" editorials and opinion columns in the nation's mainstream press. That former Perot supporters were seen as less than rational, less than knowledgeable, or even less than motivated to act politically now appears the most obvious type of distorted reality. Yet, with few exceptions the conventional media, along with academic political scientists, offered a most cautionary tale: beware the outsider.

Late last June the *New York Times* editorialized that Ross Perot, "the candidate of no political party . . . might conceivably have defeated an incumbent President in the Republican primary and be the front runner in the Democratic primary." Describing such a future possibility as "scarey," the newspaper went on to ask why it is that Americans "so hate politics." Ascribing it partly to the recession, the savings and loan scandal, and the Los Angeles riots, it concluded that Perot was the personification of the popular "None of the Above" mentality and would not sustain a serious campaign for November.

Ironically, when Perot withdrew in mid-July he had already begun to lose support, his image as a Washington outsider having been eroded by the media. Whatever the reason that prompted the pull-out (and it may have been a calculated one, but was more likely due to personal considerations of the candidate himself) Perot's carefully timed reentry was greeted by the mainstream media as a rather ineffectual step that was but another indication of the irrational politics he represented.

Back in 1972, "Nixon Democrats" turned to George Wallace before emerging as "Reagan Democrats." Thus, a third-party movement in Middle America can hold both major parties at bay, but must be careful not to sacrifice its own existence to achieve meaningful political power. If the Democrats, under the leadership of the "baby-boomer twins," can capture the heart of Middle America, they will have insured the destruction of the "hard right"/"soft right" or neo-versus-paleo split that dogs the conservative movement in America today. If there is any shred of ideological or value consistency left among conservatives, it must rest on winning the allegiance of Middle America. If the policies and ideals of Ronald Reagan or those thinkers identified with antistatist beliefs can claim a role in American politics, they must do so, not as mere intellectual or administrative interest groups, but as articulators of the best interests of the Middle American majority.

What *can* be asserted is that the volunteers who formed the cadre of Perot's campaign were by far the most formidable army of Middle Americans yet to confront the political Establishment. Moreover, these millions have escaped the fate of seeing their movement destroyed or co-opted like earlier grassroots "people's lobbies," such as the National Union for Social Justice built in 1935 by Father Charles Coughlin to challenge FDR's New Deal or George Wallace's "States Rights Party" of 1968. Both efforts have been recorded in the history books as failures, yet each managed to mobilize several million citizens, regardless of religious or party identity.

Has Perot's campaign helped radicalize Middle America? Perot's mid-course withdrawal, while viewed by many (including large numbers of his volunteers) as a betrayal, proved highly instructive. Despite what he claimed not to be, Perot was the most media-dependent candidate of them all—one created and later buoyed by television appearances. His "return" in early October was to produce a greatly increased base of support among young potential voters, a fact validated by his subsequent voter-support pattern.

With nearly half of all voters under age 30 calling themselves "independents," both major parties now appear to hold minority status. With the sharp decline in party identity, cross-pressure factors may be virtually absent from the lexicon of political scientists. Rather than realignment of party loyalty, we may now simply see the majority defining itself as free from the strictures of any partisan commitment.

Ross Perot's campaign has demonstrated in remarkable fashion that if he chose to, he could lead a Middle American "revolt." No longer will any conservative be able to undertake a major national campaign without also articulating what some call the "populist" yearnings and agenda of Middle America: a more directly responsive national government. Thus what Perot has done by generating his remarkable, albeit short-lived, insurgency is to destroy effectively the dichotomy of liberal and conservative movements as the defining reality of American politics. He has created a unifying theme for a new political alignment: one centered on the populist yearnings of Middle America.

Ross Perot has demonstrated the power of Middle America. Perhaps the Texan himself did not comprehend the significance of his own campaign until he was well caught up in its potential. Like Pat Buchanan, he did not have the so-called "street smarts" to follow its dictates. Political campaigns are felt the strongest not necessarily by the voters, so much as by the candidates. Comprehension follows conversion, not the other way around. Perhaps Mr. Perot has yet to digest what he hath wrought.

Even if we or they didn't really believe in it, the reality of Middle American anger became apparent to all in 1992. During the lengthy presidential campaign, "middle-class anger" and "populism" were catch-phrases used by all the parties and candidates. The problem with any kind of elite, including those claiming credentials to speak for the nonelite, is that it too often means a clubby peer group distant from the world it claims to know (or even to speak for).

As usual, the people lead us to the truth. Whether Mr. Perot knew during his campaign or now understands that he is the voice of MARs, history appears to have asked him to play this role for now. Are there other bidders?

Donald Warren is a political sociologist and author of The Radical Center *(1976).*

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The Myth Of The Robber Barons

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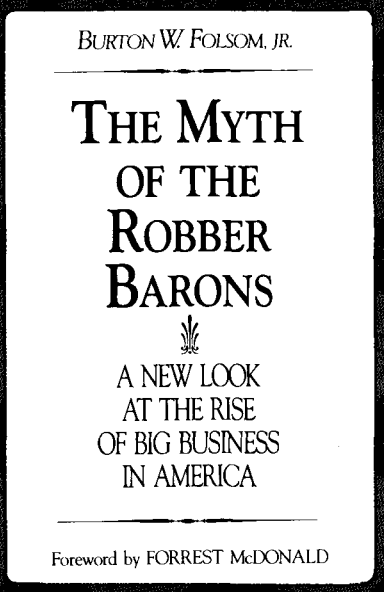
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